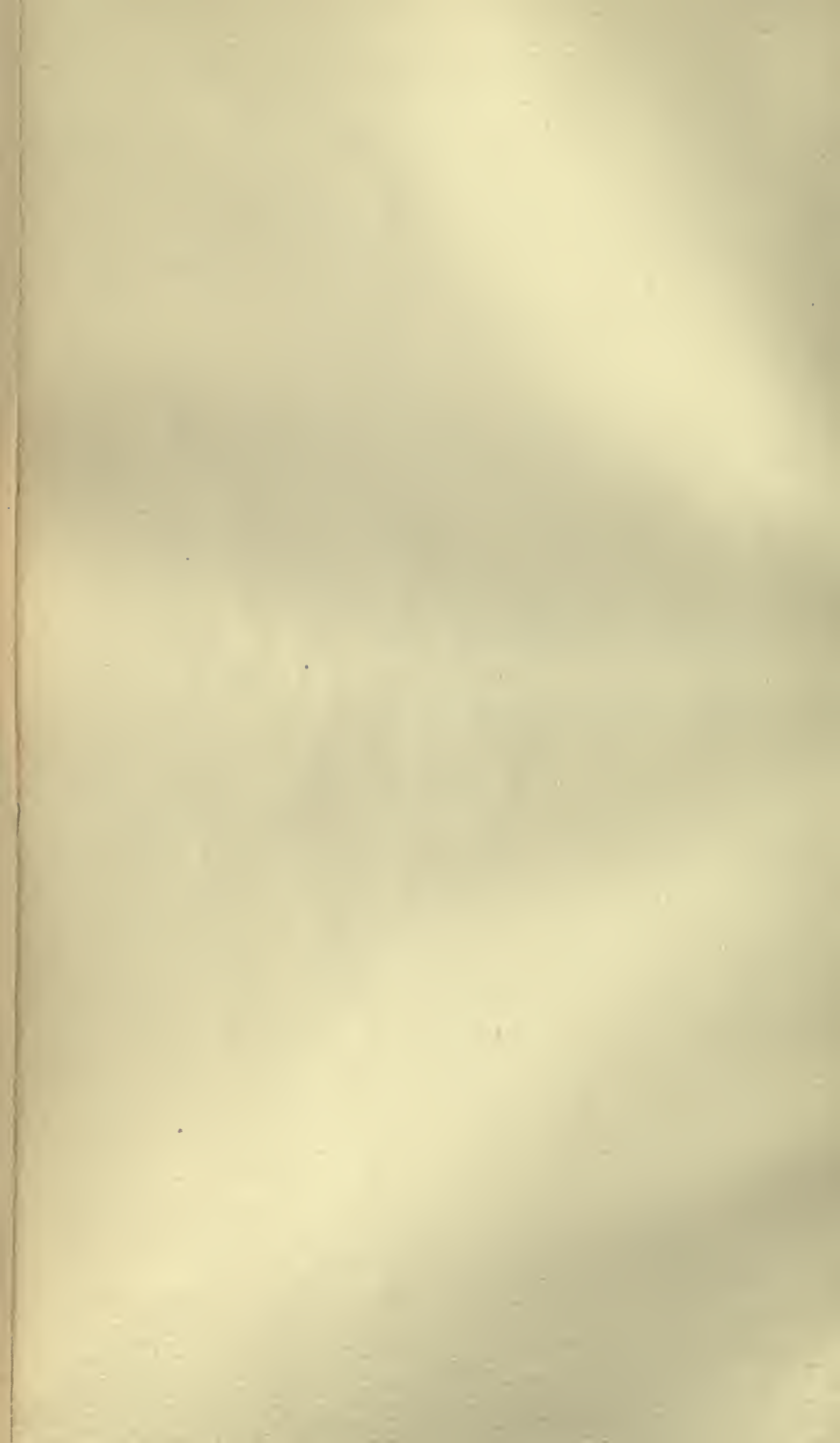




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SEVEN ANGELS OF
THE RENASCENCE



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Franz Hanfstaengl

SEVEN ANGELS OF THE RENASCENCE

THE STORY OF ART
FROM CIMABUE TO CLAUDE

BY

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PAINTERS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA" &c., &c.



*Life is Light, and is not to be
measured by Time.*

THE SECOND ANGEL.

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1905

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TO XINU
ANPOFLA

PREFACE

I TAKE the word Angel in its simplest meaning. I might have translated it into English, but that was unnecessary—everybody knows that it means Messenger. I might have said the Seven Dæmons—and if my subject had been Classic Art, that would perhaps have expressed the thing more perfectly. I might have said the Zeit-geist, but that would have required explanation. The word Angel, however, is a common word, which cannot be misunderstood.

Again, with regard to the Renascence. The Renascence is that great revival of Art which culminated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It had its beginning in the thirteenth, and lapsed altogether in the seventeenth. The First of the Seven Angels came with the Pre-Raphaelites of the Awakening, the Seventh with the Naturalists of the Decadence. Of Cimabue and Claude I shall have a word to say, but my

PREFACE

main purpose lies with the five great painters who, living and working together, bore the stress and strain of the day.

Each of these men brought to the service of Art his own special and divine gift. Da Vinci irradiated the studio with the light of the intellectual life. Michael Angelo came with the message, direct from heaven, that men should be as the gods. Titian came with the revelation from Olympus that the gods are as men. By this time some of our lamps were flaring in the darkness, some were flickering and going out. Then Raphael showed us how to keep them trimmed, and to see with clearer eyes. Last of all Correggio discovered how not until the sixth day was the world finished, when God brought Eve into Paradise.

The Art of the Renaissance, like that of ancient Greece, was in its inception, and in its chief uses, essentially religious Art. It was subjected to the strain of three forces : (1) The orthodox tradition of the stalwarts of the Catholic Church—(2) the passionate individualism of the disciples of Savonarola and Luther ; and (3) the recoil towards Paganism of those who rejected the old faith without making peace with the new. Of each of these forces I shall take account. But the Art of the Renaissance was primarily the re-incarnation of the Story of the Divine Life, and in this the

PREFACE

supreme interest lies in the figure of Christ. The Renaissance was coincident with the Reformation—Raphael and Luther were born in the same year. Thinking of the fierce struggle which seemed to wrap the world in flames one may well ask what became of the Likeness? It became the one visible bond of union between Christians. Fra Angelico, the devout Catholic, painted it kneeling upon his knees in his convent at Fiesole. Albert Dürer, the sturdiest of sturdy Reformers, engraved it for the pages of his Protestant Bible. Of all the treasures we have inherited from the time of the Apostles, the Likeness of Christ is the only one about which the Church of Christ has never quarrelled.

I can conceive of nothing more remarkable than this. Twice in the history of Christianity has the Church been torn asunder. For the same thing occurred during the Dark Ages which preceded the Awakening. The Church divided. Rome and Byzantium stood apart—denouncing, fighting, excommunicating each other. Popes and Patriarchs could not be reconciled. But the painters were not divided. The Greek and Latin icons are the same. There is a quaint legend that the rose of Palestine flowers only in the Holy Land, and on the day when Christ was born. But the Rose of the Paradise of Art unfolds its blossoms wherever there is a painter in Christendom.

PREFACE

In *Rex Regum* I have shown that this Likeness is authentic, and I have traced it century by century from the days of the Apostles. I refer to it now, not to cover the same ground—for *The Seven Angels of the Renaissance* begins where *The Likeness of Christ Rex Regum* leaves off—but because if we would understand the use that has been made of the Likeness by the great masters, it is necessary that we should know what it is, and from whence they derived it. I have therefore included in this volume a few typical illustrations from the pages of *Rex Regum*. It will be seen that the Christ of the *Seven Angels* is always the same Christ.

I have been engaged upon this book for many years. It is impossible to see with one's own eyes, and to form one's own judgment of the works of the Masters, scattered as they are through Italy and Germany and France, without the expenditure of much time and travel. Some fragments of the book have appeared as articles or reviews—in *The Contemporary*, *The National Review*, *Literature*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Critic*, and other English and American Journals—some have formed the substance of lectures at the Royal Institution.

The illustrations are not intended to supersede actual knowledge of the paintings. They serve to re-vivify in the mind of the reader splendours he

PREFACE

may have already seen, or to forecast splendours which await him when he shall stand face to face with the originals. Many of these paintings are so colossal in size, and the pages of an octavo volume are so small, that I have found it necessary in some instances to sacrifice the loveliness of the detail for the sake of the greatness of the design, or to sacrifice the design for the sake of some particular figure. The St. Cecilia and the Madonna di San Sisto are but fragments of pictures ; the School of Athens and the Cenacolo are but shadows of a shade. I justify them only because, so far as they go they are true shadows.

Through the courtesy of the *Conservatori* of the Museums of Milan, and Florence, and Rome, as well as of the British Museum and the National Gallery, I have been able to add to the portraits of the Painters and Poets—with the exception of Cimabue and Dante—authentic facsimiles of their autographs. Of Dante and Cimabue, however, it must be remembered that, like Aurora, they were very early risers. They came with the Awakening—before the House was swept, or the Studio set in order. Any manuscripts they may have left appear to have been used—as Boccaccio's certainly were used—for lighting the fires. Italy's housekeeping, nevertheless, does not compare unfavourably with our own, when we consider how little remains to us of the handwriting of Shakespeare.

PREFACE

One word more. The little outlines which form the initial letters of the seven chapters are not of sufficient importance to be catalogued in the table of contents. They are to be regarded as only notes in the margin of my MS. made with pencil instead of pen. The first is one of the Basilicas of Rome, St. Prassede, where Art slept its long sleep. The second is the Cathedral of Milan, from which Da Vinci received his first impressions of Art. The third is Santa Croce, of Florence, where Michael Angelo sleeps now. The fourth is St. Mark's, Venice, enriched with mosaics designed by Titian. The fifth is St. Peter's, Rome, of which Raphael was for a time architect and where his painting of the Transfiguration still hangs. The sixth is the Duomo, of Parma—the Parma of Correggio. The seventh—Westminster Abbey—though so far away from the studios of the great painters, is perhaps more closely identified with the Italian Renaissance of Art than any of the churches of Italy. For Westminster Abbey is the Cathedral of the Printing Press.

CONTENTS



I. THE AWAKENING	...	...	...	3
II. LEONARDO DA VINCI	...	...	...	35
III. MICHAEL ANGELO BUONARROTI	...			65
IV. TITIAN VICELLI	...	...	...	101
V. RAPHAEL SANZIO D'URBINO	...			143
VI. ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO				177
VII. ANNO DOMINI	...	...	...	209

ILLUSTRATIONS



	FACING PAGE
SAINT CECILIA. By Raphael. From a painting in the Pinakoteck, Munich	<i>Frontispiece</i>
CIMABUE. By Simon Memmi. From a fresco in Santa Maria Novella, Florence	2
THE CHRIST OF THE CATACOMBS. Fresco in the Cata- comb of St. Callisto. From "Rex Regum" ..	4
DANTE, THE POET OF THE AWAKENING. From a fresco by Raphael in the Vatican	8
THE CHRIST OF THE VERONICAS. Sudarium of San Silvestro, Rome. From "Rex Regum"	12
THE CHRIST OF THE BASILICAS. Mosaic in the Church of St. Appollinare Nuova, Ravenna. From Farrer's "Christ in Art"	24
THE CHRIST OF THE AWAKENING. From a painting by Fra Angelico in St. Mark's, Florence	30
LEONARDO DA VINCI. From a painting in the Gallery of the Uffizi, Florence.. .. .	34
THE TWO ANGELS. By Leonardo Da Vinci. From a painting in the Accademia, Florence.. ..	48

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

THE CHRIST OF DA VINCI, Drawing in the Accademia, Milan. From "Rex Regum"	52
THE LAST SUPPER. By Leonardo da Vinci. From the painting in the Refectory of the Convent of St. Maria delle Grazie, Milan	54
THE VIRGIN AND HER MOTHER, WITH THE INFANT SAVIOUR AND ST. JOHN. By Leonardo da Vinci. From a drawing in the possession of the Royal Academy.. .. .	58
MICHAEL ANGELO BUONARROTI. From the portrait by himself in the Gallery of the Uffizi	64
HOLY FAMILY. By Michael Angelo. From the paint- ing in the Gallery of the Uffizi.. .. .	70
THE LYBIAN SIBYL. By Michael Angelo. From the fresco in the Sistine Chapel	76
THE CREATION OF MAN. From the fresco by Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel	80
THE DIES IRÆ. By Michael Angelo. From the fresco in the Sistine Chapel	82
THE CHRIST OF MICHAEL ANGELO. From the painting in the National Gallery.. .. .	84
TITIAN VECELLI. From the painting in the Royal Gallery, Berlin	100
FLORA. By Titian. From the painting in the Gallery of the Uffizi, Florence	110

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
CUPID EQUIPPED. From the painting by Titian in the Borghese Gallery, Rome	118
DIONYSUS. By Titian. From the painting of Bacchus and Ariadne in the National Gallery.. .. .	124
ARIOSTO, THE POET OF THE RENASCENCE. By Titian. From the painting in the National Gallery.. .. .	128
THE CHRIST OF TITIAN. From the painting of The Tribute Money, in the Royal Gallery, Berlin.. .. .	134
RAPHAEL D'URBINO. From the painting by himself in the Pitti Palace, Florence	142
PARNASSUS. By Raphael. From the fresco in the Vatican	148
THE CHRIST OF RAPHAEL. From the painting of The Transfiguration. St. Peter's, Rome	150
THE MADONNA DI SAN SISTO. By Raphael. From the painting in the Royal Gallery, Dresden.. .. .	158
THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS. By Raphael. From the fresco in the Vatican	168
ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO. From a painting in the Sacristy of Parma Cathedral	176
THE HOLY FAMILY. By Correggio. From the painting in the National Gallery.. .. .	188
THE CHRIST OF CORREGGIO. From the " Ecce Homo " in the National Gallery.. .. .	190

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
AMORETTI. By Correggio. From the Refectory of the Convent of San Paolo, Parma	194
THE HOLY NIGHT. By Correggio. From the painting in the Royal Gallery, Dresden.. .. .	198
CLAUDE LORRAINE. From the Musée Royale, Paris	208
TASSO. THE POET OF THE DECADENCE. From an old engraving by Raphael Morghen	214
AURORA. By Guido Reni. From the painting in the Rospigliosi Palace, Rome	216
SUNRISE. By Claude Lorraine. From the painting in the National Gallery.. .. .	222
SHAKESPEARE. From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery.. .. .	230
THE CHRIST OF THE DECADENCE. From a painting by Velasquez, in the Museum of the Prado, Madrid ..	236



THE PRINCESS. *Is that you, my Cimabue?*

CIMABUE. *Yes, it is I—and others are coming.*

THE PRINCESS. *I have waited long.*

(ENTER A MESSENGER.)

MESSENGER. *Giotto is at the gate.*





Alinari

PLATE II. CIMABUE

FROM THE FRESCO BY SIMON MEMMI IN
THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA

TO THE
LIBRARY OF THE
CONGRESS

THE AWAKENING



HAVE NAMED IT the Awakening because Art had been asleep. Asleep, not dead—Art does not die. It is the artist who dies—and his works often perish with him. Nations die and are forgotten ; but Art—like

the Princess in the Story of the Briar Rose—only sleeps. Art fell asleep when Rome, having spent the first three centuries of the Christian era—from Augustus, that is, to Constantine—in portrait painting, became tired of it, and found nothing more in her annals worth recording. And then, as

THE AWAKENING

the Romans had ravaged Greece, so the Goths ravaged Rome. What could Art do better in the darkness than go to sleep?

It was in the fourth century that the palette of the painter was laid aside for the smelting-pot of the mosaic-worker, and the counting began. To design a picture with a great sweep of the brush is one thing—to build it up with tesserae of gold or glass is a very different matter. One, two, three, of yellow—one, two, three, four, of crimson—one, two, three, four, five, of blue, until you come to the tip of the longest pen-feather of the angel's wing—which is to be of rosy pink, and six tesserae above the centre of the aureole of the seventh angel. I know not the nature of the spell by which the cruel fairy closed the eyes of the Princess—perhaps the Princess nodded over her embroidery—but I am sure that too much counting, and too little freedom of the brush, are sufficient to explain the slumber into which Art fell.

At any rate, whatever may have been the cause, Art, like the Princess, slept. Yes—and dreamed. She dreamed of the old days of portraiture, when the new religion came to Rome, and men turned from the imaginary faces of the Muses and Apollo, to the real faces of Christ and the Apostles. She dreamed of the dark corridors of the catacombs, made glorious, if only you carried a lighted taper in your hand, by frescoes of the great Leader who



PLATE III. THE CHRIST OF THE CATACOMBS

FROM A FRESCO IN THE
CATACOMB OF S. CALLISTO

70 1940
August 10

DREAMING OF CHRIST

had gone away for a little while but had promised to come again in like form. She dreamed of the still darker graves, with the Likeness laid upon the faces of the dead. She dreamed of the building of the great basilicas, with triumphal arches on which were emblazoned the same Likeness, which had been hidden so long in the catacombs, but had now become the most treasured possession of Christendom, and the one theme of Art. She dreamed of the illuminated manuscripts of the sacred books, enriched with visions of angels—

with aureoles like golden quoits
Pitched home—

as Robert Browning puts it. She forgot in her dreams that quoits are more antient than aureoles, that they were not made of gold, that they were not worn by the Greeks upon the head, but were flung with the hand—as we may see now in the Discobolus at the British Museum. Nevertheless, whatever Art remembered, or forgot, or dreamed, one thing is certain—like the Princess in the Fairy Book she slept.

Until the Awakening. And it was a long time to sleep. The Prince came in the thirteenth century—and we call him Cimabue. Whether it was Cimabue or Margaritone who first discovered the Princess I am not sure. It was Margaritone

THE AWAKENING

who cut away the tangled briar—the growth of a thousand years — with its cruel thorns, which hedged her round. But it was Cimabue who claimed the Princess as his bride. There she lay, asleep, in her wonderful beauty, as if she had just closed her eyes. “ Trembling, he approached, and knelt beside her. Some say he kissed her—but as nobody saw it, and she never told, we cannot be quite sure of the fact. However, as the end of the enchantment had come, the Princess awakened at once, and looking at him with eyes of the tenderest regard, said drowsily,—Is that you, my Cimabue ? I have waited for you very long.” Was Cimabue then the First of the Seven Angels of the Renaissance ? I do not say that, any more than that Socrates was himself the dæmon who, he declares, led him in the right way, saved him from impiety, and crime, and would, when he came to die, present him to the Righteous Judge. I say only that Cimabue was present at the Awakening.

It is about the middle of the thirteenth century. A little boy is lingering at the doors of a church in Florence. He ought to be on his way to school ; but truants will be truants in one century as well as in another. The church is being decorated by a company of Greek artists who have been brought from Byzantium, by the Governor of the city. Every day there is a scholar too few in the school

CIMABUE AND DANTE

room—and one too many in St. Maria Novella. But the artists take kindly to the lad, and an attachment springs up between them.

The boy's name is Cimabue, and he is of a noble family. His father humours him in his desire, and he is placed with the artists as their pupil. The rest follows. What the mosaic-worker, Margaritone, had begun, in breaking through the trammels of his craft and painting upon canvas, Cimabue completed by using the art of painting as a living language.

That is the point—the turning of a dead language into a living. And Dante was, at the very same time, doing the very same thing with the Italian dialect. The world was mute. After ten centuries of silence there were none to sing, and the voices of the great bards of Greece and Rome were forgotten. Then came the *Divina Commedia*, like a burst of solemn music from a cathedral organ, rolling in mighty waves through transept, nave, and chancel, heard in the quiet chapels, reverberating through the vaulted roof. Since then many voices have joined in, like the singing of a choir, but it was a grand thing for this one man to wake the world to listen. Dante was indeed the Poet of the Awakening. The name Alighieri—a *wing* or, that is, *on a field azure*, was his by inheritance. But he more than inherited it

THE AWAKENING

—he gave to it a meaning. His life spelled out the mystery of the emblazonment. His were the wings of gold ; his were the blue heavens, and his flight such that we who sometimes lift our eyes to follow him are almost blinded as we gaze. Who that has read the Divine Comedy can ever forget Dante's first vision of his Beatrice ? After the terrors of Hell, the bitterness of Purgatory, the wall of fire through which he will pass, because she is at the other side—

Saying, " Her eyes I seem to see already ! "
A voice that on the other side was singing,
" Venite, benedicti, patris mei,"
Sounded within a splendour which was there,
Such it o'ercame me, and I could not look.

He is not, however, so much overcome but that he can wield his *terza rima* as a lash with which to scourge the painters for their ambition. Cimabue and Giotto had been his friends, yet he places them in Purgatory to be punished for the sin of pride. At least he prepares a place for them in the First Circle, and spends much sarcasm on that vanity of vanities—the desire for fame. Had the grim Florentine nothing to answer for on his own account ? If Cimabue the painter must expiate the sin of striving for immortality—" Being put to proof by the Old Adversary "—how shall Dante the poet escape, who has so keen an eye for the

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PLATE IV. DANTE, THE POET OF THE AWAKENING

FROM A FRESCO BY RAPHAEL IN
THE STANZE OF THE VATICAN

WITHOUT MALICE

Laurel? Perhaps Art is kinder than Poetry. Perhaps Giotto was more tender-hearted than Dante. When Giotto painted Dante he did not assign him to the infernal regions. He placed him in Paradise, with a palm branch in his hand.

It is a curious thing, this disposing of each other's immortal souls by poet and painter. But it is not in the rôle of Judge that Dante shines. He makes many mistakes, which await correction by a court of higher appeal. But with what high aims and aspirations—with what passion of love and life his words must have filled the studios of the painters—even though he does occasionally commit a friend or two to the flames. He is so sure he is right—as sure as the country parson sitting on the Bench to-day is sure, who commits the Dissenting Minister to prison as a Passive Resister. There is no malice in it. I do not attribute this apparent harshness so much to the hardness of his heart as to the severity of his creed. What could he do? He *must* find Homer and Horace in hell. He knew of nowhere else to look for them—nor for Plato and Socrates, nor for Euclid and Ptolemy, nor for Orpheus, or Hector, or Diogenes, or Brutus—who drove the Tarquin forth. But if it must be so—if the Inferno is to be peopled with these mighty spirits Dante takes care that it shall be comfortable for them. Cæsar

THE AWAKENING

in armour, with gerfalcon eyes ; Homer, the Poet sovereign ; the star-gazer ; the man of triangles—he sees them every one. They live in a flood of luminous glory. They are walking in a meadow of fresh verdure, where stands a noble castle, seven times defended with lofty walls, encompassed by a fair rivulet. The Poet of the Awakening must have dreamed pleasant dreams.

Margaritone, Cimabue, Giotto—slowly the roll-call lengthens. Giotto was a peasant lad, when in the year 1277, just two hundred years, that is, before Titian was born—Cimabue found him in the fields, a ten-year-old child, drawing one of the sheep he was tending. The great painter recognised the boy's genius—it seemed like his own childhood over again—and taking him to Florence made him his pupil. Small, weak, deformed, of humble birth, yet if Cimabue was a prince, Giotto was a king in the realms of Art. And the realms of Art to him were very wide. He was architect and built the campanile of Florence—Giotto's Tower. He was mosaic-worker, and designed the lovely tympanum over the door of the old basilica of St. Peter's, representing Christ appearing to His disciples in the storm. The mosaic is still preserved within the vestibule of the new cathedral. Giotto enriched the church of St. Francis at Assisi with the series of frescoes telling the story of the

THE SECOND SLEEP

Saint's life. Padua and Naples, Milan, Ravenna, Pisa, and Lucca, have long been famous for the splendour of his works.—while the more recently discovered frescoes of the church of Santa Croce, are counted amongst the finest of them all.

And now a strange thing happens, of which I must be content to give the record without venturing upon an explanation. The Princess has risen from her long sleep. The festivities have begun. The art of painting has revived in Italy. Whichever of the three may have been the bridegroom, Margaritone, Cimabue, and Giotto, have danced together at the wedding.—when suddenly the stage is darkened, the *dramatis personæ* disappear, and Italy is left for nearly a hundred years with scarcely an artist of the first rank living to maintain the traditions of the Court of the Muses. Perhaps the Princess had gone away for her honeymoon, and left Orcagna, and Spinello to keep things alive until her return.

Why did the Renaissance thus delay its coming? Yesterday I read a little poem in an evening newspaper—read it, and left the paper in the train by which I was travelling. The versification was faulty, some of the lines seemed to halt, so that the thing was not worth preserving. But I recall the loveliness of it. Only one voice is heard. It

THE AWAKENING

is that of a woman. She is speaking to her lover, who has delayed—delayed because he loved her, and desired to prove himself worthy of her by winning fame, which he would lay at her feet. But she has loved him all the while, and her cry is, “Why have you come so late?” She would have climbed the hill with him. She would have shared with him the pain of the struggle as well as the glory of the triumph. Listen now to another cry. The Christian is asking the very same question—of the Painter—Why did you come so late? We might together have won the victory—and have slain the old enemy—Superstition. What if the Likeness, instead of being only a record made by Roman artists, who may not have believed in Christ, or by disciples, faithful indeed, but unskilled in the painters’ craft, had been drawn from the life by a Da Vinci, a Michael Angelo or a Raphael? It is a vain question. It is like asking why the blossom comes before the fruit—why the fruit waits for the blossom to fade.

If, however, we could explain the first millenium of waiting, it still seems a strange thing that when the Awakening did come there should have come also a second sleep. The fourteenth century is the mystery of the Renaissance, and the events which mark it call for careful study. It seemed to have opened well for the painter. Art had found a new language. Giotto and Dante were still

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PLATE V. THE CHRIST OF THE VERONICAS

FROM THE VERONICA OF
S. SILVESTRO, ROME

THE RECORD OF THE CITIES

living. Orcagna—"the little archangel"—with Petrarch and Boccaccio were soon to be of the company. Moreover, a man was born about this time who should live to be called the saviour of his country. A man of the noblest ambitions, proficient in classic literature, with exalted conceptions of justice and liberty, splendid for his personal beauty and his prowess in arms, gifted with a voice that transformed his orations into oratorios. Rienzi attempted to restore the ancient Republic and the Pope was driven from the Vatican. But Rienzi was dragged down by the nobles of the land—he became one of the glorious company of the assassinated,—and the Popes returned, to be deposed and assassinated in their turn. That is the record of the Eternal City.

And Florence? Well, the citizens of Florence spent the century in quarrelling as to which of two German families—the Guelphs or the Ghibelines—should be their masters. That is the record of the City of Flowers.

And then Venice. The Venetian fleet is defeated by the Genoese. The Genoese fleet is defeated by the Venetians. The Doge conspires against the Republic. Dalmatia and Istria are ceded to Austria. A hundred years of conspiracy and war. That is the record of the Queen City of the Adriatic.

How differently these records will affect different minds. I am concerned with them of course

THE AWAKENING

only as they affect Art. Why should the Renaissance have delayed its coming? Why should the Princess have lingered so long over her awakening? We are in the fourteenth century—a century full of discord, and tumult, and war. But if we look forward to the Renaissance, or back to Hellas, history has the same story to unfold. It is not peace or war, prosperity or adversity, that controls the rise and fall of schools of Art. What peace did Torquemada bring to the painters of the fifteenth century? They may have caught the expression of the faces of their souls in purgatory from the faces they had seen wreathed with flame at the stake. Durer was the friend of Luther, when he nailed his thesis to the church door. There were stirring times during the life of Titian—when Venice stood in arms, alone, against the world. Rome and Florence were not without their troubles in the time of Michael Angelo. Dante did indeed sigh for peace, but that was when his work was done.

And Greek Art. Had the Athenians peace while Phidias was designing the friezes of the Parthenon? During his life there was—in Greece—an earthquake, a pestilence, the revolt of two provinces, a rebellion, and thirteen great battles—from the defence of the Pass of Thermopylæ, to the first Peloponnesian war. And afterwards? Within thirty years of his death Athens itself was forced

IS IT PEACE ?

by famine to surrender to its enemies, and its walls were razed to the ground. Is it necessary to recount the conspiracies, the tyrannies, the revolutions, the bloodshed, the disasters, the civil wars, that followed the building of the Parthenon, for nearly three hundred years—until Greece submitted finally to Rome ? That period of three hundred years embraced the lives not only of Phidias, but of Praxiteles, and Polycletus, who are accounted the greatest sculptors the world has known. It represents confessedly the highest period of Greek Art. The name of Hellas falls pleasantly on the ear—but had Hellas peace ?

It is not then to Revolution in Rome, or conspiracy in Venice, or faction in Florence, that we must look for an explanation of the slowness of the evolution of Art in the fourteenth century. These incidents are the effect of causes which lie much deeper at the root of things. Christendom had been engaged for two hundred years in the fruitless effort to plant the Cross in the Holy Land. Eight times had Italy and France and Germany and Spain, and England, sent the flower of their chivalry to Palestine. Eight times, from Godfrey de Bouillon, and Cœur de Lion, to St. Louis of France and our first Edward, had the Cross been beaten down by the Crescent. Perhaps Christ never intended that His Kingdom should be won

THE AWAKENING

by fire and sword. It is easy for us to say that now, and I for one believe it to be true. Nevertheless it is also true that the Crusaders set before themselves, and held steadily before Christendom, a lofty ideal of courage, and chivalry, and faith, and self-sacrifice—and it is in high ideals that Art lives, and moves, and has its being. It is not success, it is the cause that inspires.

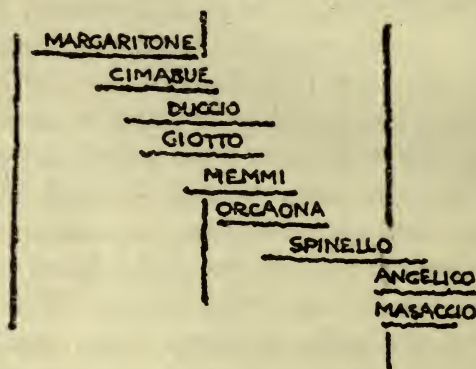
The cause failed. The Crusades were finally abandoned at the close of the thirteenth century, and the fourteenth century witnessed the *débâcle*. Attempts at racial conquest are of necessity followed by demoralization of the people. In every case, victors or vanquished, the soldiery are driven back upon the citizens—without means, without employment, their souls and bodies saturated with evils generated in the life of the camp, by the absolute negation for a time at least of all the laws of God and man. And the men who thus return comprise the worst rather than the best of their kind—the best and bravest are too often left to fertilize the soil of the country against which they have been fighting. Why should a new language have been invented for the painter in which to chronicle all this? Was it worth chronicling? The painters appear to have thought it was not. They turned their attention to charades. In England these charades are

CLOUDS

known as *mysteriæ*—in Italy they were called by their true name *nuvoli*—that is “clouds.” Even the artist was re-named, becoming “the carpenter”—*legnaiolo*—of the Church. It was his business to make machines, by means of which men and boys, swathed in cotton wool, could be manœuvred to represent the great drama of Redemption—the Ascension of our Lord—the Assumption of the Virgin—the Transfiguration—anything and everything that could take place in clouds—as if the Kingdom of Heaven were a province of cloud-land. These machines—made of wood, with poles and ropes, and many pulleys, were carried in procession through the streets, and hauled up in the cathedral above the rood screen. The Angels, lashed to the poles to keep them steady, and weighted by balances of lead to keep them upright—together with the glorious company of the Apostles and their risen Lord, were covered with cloud upon cloud of semi-transparent whiteness. In the church of the Carmine a second “cloud,” engineered by a windlass with vast wheels, represented the Ten Circles of Heaven. Vasari says—for the custom lingered through the fifteenth century to his time—that it was all very solemn, and beautiful, and admirably contrived. He does not say how it began and ended. It began with the innocent but vulgar desire for spectacle—for what are called “bright services”—services to

THE AWAKENING

attract the masses. Have we not seen such expedients tried? It ended with refined and exalted visions of the Beatific Life, and the *Dies Iræ*—as painted by Fra Angelico and Michael Angelo. Look at these nine lines I have scored across the page. They represent the lives of nine



of the painters of the Awakening. They come in the thirteenth century as flowers in spring—to be followed by the flowers of summer. But between spring and summer, between the Awakening, that is, and the Renaissance, there is a terrible hiatus. For a period of more than fifty years after the passing of Giotto, only two or three painters of the Awakening seem to have kept their eyes open. There is no Umbrian School, or School of Venice, or of Tuscany, or of Milan, or of Bologna, or of Parma, or of Naples, or of Florence, or of Rome. Only Duccio goes on for a few years painting the

THE HOLY FIELD

story of the life of Christ, in the Duomo of Siena—Spinello takes up the miracles of the saints in San Miniato—while Orcagno shows us the Argosies, in the Campo Santo of Pisa. One of our painter poets, A. W. Hunt—who is now himself sleeping in holy ground—describes these Argosies in verses as lovely as his own pictures. They are the Argosies of the Crusaders, bringing home their treasure from the East—not of pearls or jewels—not of silver or gold—

O happy winds our sails that fill !
O happy waves around us leaping !
For blessed earth from Calvary's hill
Is what our frail barks hold in keeping.

Dust—very God hath trodden ! dust—
Which they who bore it o'er the sea
Sought to be laid in, with fond trust
Their sleep would thereby sweeter be.

But these frescoes were painted near the close of the century, and I must not anticipate.

Besides, there was another influence at work which stayed the evolution of painting in the fourteenth century. The passion for Art was drawn into other channels—poetry, and music, sculpture and architecture.

It was during the first crusade that Europe slowly emerged from the barbarism of the dark

THE AWAKENING

ages. The new civilization began with song. Poetry and Music came as twin-sisters. The scale was invented ; melody began to be distinguished from harmony ; time was found to be capable of measurement and notation—in a word, Music became one of the Fine Arts. And with Music, Poetry. The troubadours were both poets and musicians. They sang of love, and war ; of the illustrious men and women of the age ; they satirized the priests and monks ; they filled the courts of princes with delight, until the last Crusade, and then—they vanished.

This was in Italy and France, and Spain. But in Germany, music and poetry followed the same course. Only in Germany, the Minnesingers did not vanish with the troubadours. They formed themselves into an “ Incorporated Society ” and, that there might be no mistake as to who and what they were, they changed their modest name of “ Minnesingers ” into “ Meistersingers.” That was a hundred years before Hans Sachs became their Dean.

Then there were the *miniatori*, or, as Dante—careful, after a visit to Paris, of his French accent, prefers to call them, the *alluminari in Parisi*—who, during the dark ages, kept the lamp of Art burning ; illuminating not manuscripts only, but the hearts of scholars with the sense of the loveli-

THE SCRIPTORIUM

ness of colour and design, which—if not Art in its highest form—still is Art. Think of the colophon which closed each volume with some message from the writer to the reader—of thankfulness that the task was accomplished—of laughter at the humour of the book—of anathema on anyone who should steal it—but more often of prayer to God, and entreaties to the reader for his intercession. “Ye who read, pray for me, the most sinful of men.” “Keep safe, O Trinity, my three fingers with which I have written this book.” These are some of the phrases with which the old copyists lingered over their last page, where we are content to write the word *Finis*.

There is a lovely picture of such a Scriptorium in the Golden Legend—where, as the daylight dies, Friar Pacificus lays down his weary pen—

It is growing dark ! yet one line more,
And then my work for the day is o'er.
I come again to the Name of the Lord !
Let me pause awhile, and wash my pen ;
Pure from blemish and spot it must be
When I write that word of mystery.

Thus the patient scribe wears out his eyes, if not his heart, in transcribing the sacred text—counting the words and letters as faithfully as the mosaic worker counts the tesserae in the aureole of

THE AWAKENING

Christ. Moreover, the missal painter has his share of the original sin of the true artist—which, according to Dante, cost Cimabue and Giotto so dear. Listen again to Pacificus—

There now, is an initial letter !
Saint Ulric himself never wrote a better :
Finished down to the leaf and the snail,
Down to the eyes on the peacock's tail !
It is well written, though I say it !
I should not be afraid to display it,
In open day, on the self-same shelf
With the writings of Saint Thecla herself,
Or of Theodosius, who of old
Wrote the Gospels in letters of gold !
Take it, O Lord, and let it be
As something I have done for Thee !

(He turns to the window.)

How sweet the air is ! How fair the scene !
I wish I had as lovely a green
To paint my landscapes and my leaves !
How the swallows twitter under the eaves !
There now, there is one in her nest ;
I can catch a glimpse of her head and breast,
And will sketch her thus in her quiet nook,
For the margin of my Gospel book.

(He makes a sketch.)

I can see no more.

But was it only the twittering of a swallow ?
It was growing dark ; he could see no more ; he
had caught but a glimpse—it might have been a
thrush. I do not know. Perhaps he thought that
an illuminated missal is to a painted picture

THE ARCH-ARTIST

as the twittering of a *rondinella* is to the song of a *tordo*. The missal painter, however, and the missal thrush are not so very far apart as the derivation of their names suggest. If the song in the cloister garden is Music, the drawing in the scriptorium is Art.

And now Architecture. Is not the designer of everything—the arch-artist—the master of all the arts—the Architect—to be taken into account in considering the forces which kept Art alive during the dark centuries? Yes, but the architect and the painter stand so very far apart that—like men who speak the same language in different dialects—they fail sometimes to understand each other. The glory of the architect is that his work shall be seen to be what it is—the glory of the painter is that his work shall seem to be what it is not. And so it fell out that when painting had almost become a lost art, architecture was at its best. Westminster Abbey, in England—Chartres Cathedral, in France—the Dom Kirche of Andernach, in Germany—the Cloisters of Seville, in Spain—the Duomo of Siena, in Italy—are sufficient to remind us that in the midst of the darkness the Architect moved in a light of his own. And with him the Sculptor. For the two worked together—though we forget sometimes how very little they did to help the painter. The old

THE AWAKENING

mosaic-workers found in the domes and triumphal arches of the basilicas the place of all places where they could best exercise their craft. But the groined vaulting of a gothic cathedral is complete in itself. In the construction of the churches I have named painting might have been left altogether out of the account. The pictures which adorn them are not of the essence of the building—they are limited to the decoration of an altar or a shrine. In Westminster Abbey, for instance, there is no painting at all, even the altar piece is a modern mosaic from the workshop of an Italian manufactory.

But for all that, the new language lived, and presently it found something to say. I am afraid that I have said too much about the new language already. But I pray to be forgiven, because after all it is the heart of the subject. And there is yet one word to add. The invention of painting was to Art precisely what the invention of printing was to Letters.

Now this is very curious. When we look closely into the matter it seems a contradiction in terms. For what was it that the printing press did? *It substituted machine work for hand work.* It superseded the writing of manuscripts by the setting up of type—tesselated letters—as uniform as the tesserae of the mosaic worker, and as mechani-



PLATE VI. THE CHRIST OF THE BASILICAS

FROM A MOSAIC IN THE CHURCH OF
S APPOLLINARE NUOVO, RAVENNA

THE NEW LANGUAGE

cal in application. No more, if you please, of the beautiful flourish of illuminated capitals, or sweeps of the pen, with a twiddle in the middle, reaching half across the page. "A, is A," says the compositor, "and nothing else; let us keep to facts." Very well then, what was it that the substitution of brush-work for mosaic, did for Art? It was the exact reverse of what printing did. *It was the substitution of hand work for machine work.* No more, if you please, of the old method of counting—one, two, three, four—to the aureole—and five, six, seven—to the tip of the angel's wing. We do all that with a sweep of the pencil dipped in the colour we have made to our own pleasure—not chosen from a manufacturer's store, as ladies choose their silks for embroidery. But if Art finds its new life in emancipation from machine work, and Letters in emancipation from handwork, what have the two in common that they should be classed together?

The question discloses the answer. *They are emancipated.* It is the setting free—the breaking away from old traditions—the revolt from the superstitions of the dark ages, that brings new life both to Letters and to Art. Whether the restraint was the limitation of the power of communicating thought, from which the poet was redeemed by the printing press, or the limitation of the power of

THE AWAKENING

expressing thought, from which the painter was redeemed by the free use of the brush does not matter—the redemption came. The redemption came with the Reformation. If the Reformation had not followed the Awakening the Princess would have fallen back into a slumber that might have proved endless. The new language which the Prince had learned would have been useless if he had nothing new to say in it.

See now, how all things move to the same end. Margaritone, Cimabue, Giotto, have ransomed Art—the Printing Press has ransomed Letters—the Reformation has ransomed Mind. We have become free men. But we do not owe our freedom as men to Florence, or Rome, or Siena, or Pisa. Italy created the new language of Art, but the something new to say in it did not come from Italy. It came from a little village in England, where Wycliffe—driven from Oxford, condemned by the Pope, and by William, Archbishop of Canterbury—was quietly translating the Scriptures. Wycliffe's Bible is only a translation of a translation—the Vulgate—but it served its purpose. How far away Lutterworth seems from the Campo Santo of Pisa! It is just the same distance that Pisa is from the Holy Land. How different the argosies of the Crusaders from the flames in which the martyrs perished. But did

PETRARCH AND BOCCACCIO

Wycliffe perish ? His ashes were thrown into the little river Swift—which flowed by his garden—a tributary of the Avon, and an old ballad says—

The Avon to the Severn ran,
The Severn to the sea ;
And Wycliffe's dust was borne afar
Like that from Calvary.

In the meantime the few remaining painters of the Awakening were not without light in their own country. With Petrarch and Boccaccio living amongst them it seems scarcely conceivable that Art should really die. Petrarch and Boccaccio were children together at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and lived together till well towards its close. As Dante had been the friend of Giotto so was Petrarch the friend of Simon Memmi, who painted for him the portrait of his Laura. After all, poets and painters are but reflections of the life of the age in which they live. The spiritual unrest—the personal ambitions of rival families, the uncontrolled passions of sensual desire, are flashed in the singers' rhymes, as well as in the artist's colour. It was just a hundred years after Cimabue stood at the door of Santa Maria Novella watching the painters at their work, that a scene was enacted of a very different character. The plague which, in the middle of the fourteenth century, swept across Europe, devas-

THE AWAKENING

tating London, and Paris, has not spared the City of Flowers. The little bell in Santa Maria rings for mass, but the church is empty. At last a lady moves slowly towards the altar. She is followed by another, and another, till there are seven. They are robed in black. The service over they exchange salutations. At that moment three gentlemen approach. They are all known to each other—some are indeed lovers. They agree to leave Florence, to elect one of them as their Queen, and to spend such nights as may remain to them—before they are swept into the charnel house—at Fiesole, where each of the ten shall in turn tell some tale of love or adventure. That is the story of the Decameron. And as Boccaccio tells it the thing seems so real that to this day it is uncertain whether his characters were living realities or only the creatures of his imagination.

Another century. I feel that I am dealing with the centuries too lightly—as if they were pawns in a game of chess. And so they are. For pawns are of different values according to the possibilities of their reaching the eighth square. Sometimes they seem to come to an impasse, as did the fourteenth, which should have seen the meridian splendour of the Renaissance, but lingered over the Awakening. A century is so long a time,

SAVONAROLA

compared with the painter's life—it is so short a time compared with the painter's Art—that the word seems to have two scales of meaning. It is a convenient word, however, perhaps for that very reason.

Another century—this time the sense of the word is to be found in the shorter scale—and the scene again changes. There is a great procession in Florence, of priests, and monks, and an innumerable company of citizens, with Savonarola at their head. See, the smoke of the burning. The whole city has been ransacked, and every copy of the Decameron of Boccaccio is being committed to the flames.

There is only one thing that does not suffer change. Throughout the centuries of the Awakening the painters are painting Christ. Sometimes in the old method of mosaic, sometimes in the new method of fresco—but always the same Christ. The Christ that the first Christians knew in the darkness of the catacombs during long years of Roman persecution—the Christ that the Fathers knew, when under Constantine they received religious freedom, and emblazoned the Likeness on the triumphal arches of their basilicas. The Christ that Margaritone and Cimabue knew when they were still counting—one, two, three, of blue—four, five, six, of gold. The Christ who never

THE AWAKENING

wept, never smiled, never frowned—but only looked straight into your eyes, as if He would read your heart, that He might know whether you really loved Him or not.

For the frescoes and glass pictures of the catacombs had served their purpose in securing to the painter the knowledge of the Likeness of Christ. The mosaics of the basilicas had served the same purpose in preserving it, not only from the ravages of the barbarians, but from the corruptions which might have destroyed it in the dark ages, or debased it by the debasement of Art. And now the dawn is breaking—the dawn of the Renaissance—the Renaissance of Art. The painters shall still paint Christ. They shall paint Apollo as well, and Diana, and Adonis and Jove—they shall paint everything that God has created or man has imagined, but they shall still paint Christ. *Per Agonem et Sanguineum Sudorem; per Crucem et Passionem; per pretiosam Mortem et Sepulturam; per gloriosam Resurrectionem, et Ascensionem tuam in cælos.* That is the Litany of Fiesole. Is it not very much like our own? The first Christians had never represented the sufferings of the Redeemer. No man paints the portrait of his friend in the agony of death—it is the living face, that can give back love for love, and smile for smile, that personal affection desires to recall. But when Fra Angelico for the first time brings a smile into the

THE CHRIST OF THE AWAKENING



Alinari

PLATE VII. THE CHRIST OF THE AWAKENING

FROM A PAINTING BY FRA ANGELICO
IN SAN MARCO, FLORENCE

THE PAINTER'S LITANY

face of the Man of Sorrows, when Michael Angelo paints the Son of Man laid in the grave—when Raphael paints the Son of God communing with the Father—surely there will be a difference. From this time the painter is no more content to paint the Likeness of Christ apart from expression. The whole story of His life must be told—not in the passionless simplicity of portraiture with which it had been told in the catacombs and the basilicas, but with the passion of the great revival of Art, and with the knowledge which makes the human face an open book to the artist.

I have done now with my first simile of the Sleeping Princess—but only to change it for another. What is that—

“Hist!”—said Kate the Queen.

But “Oh!” cried the maiden binding her tresses—

“Tis only a page that carols unseen” —

The maiden was mistaken. It was the First of the Seven Angels of the Renaissance. The Princess lifted her eyes, and lo! the heavens were full of stars.

LEONARDO DA VINCI



MONA LISA. *But I am an old woman, and you painted me twenty years ago. Why do you desire to paint me again?*

LEONARDO. *I painted you then as the Blessed Virgin. Now you are old enough for me to paint you as her mother. Stay—I am called.*

(ENTER THE ANGEL.)

MONA LISA. *What does the Messenger say?*

THE ANGEL. *Life is Light, and is not to be measured by Time.*



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Leonardo da Vinci

PLATE VIII. FROM A PAINTING
IN THE UFFIZI, FLORENCE

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LEONARDO DA VINCI



THEY know little of the poetry of the heavens who think of the stars only as so many points of light in the purple darkness—without realising the loveliness of the clusters in which they are grouped. From

Homer to Virgil, from Dante to Shakespeare, it is always the constellation rather than the “bright particular star” that fills the imagination with high and beautiful thoughts. Listen to Minerva, as she addresses the Muses on the occasion of her first visit to the streams of Helicon.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

"I come," she says, "to see the new fountain which you say sprang from the rock when it was touched by the feet of the wingèd steed."

"It is true," replied Urania. "I saw him strike the ground, and the waters rushed forth. But I saw more. I saw Pegasus himself spring from the Medusa, when Perseus smote off her head."

And Minerva looks round upon the lovely scene, the groves of laurel and palm, the grottoes, the fields studded with innumerable flowers, and she thinks the Nine Sisters, must be very happy—particularly with such an addition to their *ménage* as a flying horse! And so they were. But for ourselves—we see Pegasus only in the sky, and wonder every night which of the Nine is holding the rein. For alas our eyes can discern only a cluster of stars where his head should be, and nothing to represent the swish of his tail.

This, however, must not be taken to prove that our vision is imperfect. For Pegasus has no tail. At least not now. It may have been different when Urania saw him—but now he comes head foremost out of the clouds. We know that it is Pegasus because of his wings—but we see no more. How is this? What have we lost? Have we lost the vision only? or have we lost the imagination—from which the vision springs as the sacred waters spring from Helicon? To lose either would mean the decay and ultimate annihilation of Art.

THE FLOOR OF HEAVEN

It has not really come to that just yet. The story of the constellation of Pegasus is so old that the mind reels to think of the ages during which even the meaning of the names of its chief stars—markab, scheat, and algenib—has been forgotten. And yet Art has a good memory. Look at Achilles' shield—as bright to-day as when it came from the hand of the artist god. There shone the starry lights of heaven—

The Pleiads, Hyads, with the Northern Team ;
And Great Orion's more refulgent beam ;
To which, around the axle of the sky,
The Bear revolving points his golden eye.

This—eight hundred years before Christ ! And twice eight hundred years after Christ it is the same. Shakespeare says—

Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlay'd with patines of bright gold :
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young eyed cherubim.

It is then to a group of painters, rather than to an individual genius—to the choir of heaven rather than to a solitary voice—that I turn for light and music. Just as in considering the Art of the Victorian Era, I studied the life and works of five great painters—Leighton, Millais, Watts, Burne Jones, Holman Hunt—finding in them the

LEONARDO DA VINCI

expression of the Art of our own day, so now I set before me the life and work of five great painters of the Renaissance—Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Titian, Raphael, and Correggio—regarding them not as solitary stars, but as a constellation in the firmament of Art.

I have named them in the order of their birth. Their lives lie in parallel lines, and cover a period of a little more than a century—from 1452, when Da Vinci was born—to 1576, when Titian died.



Only for a very few years, however, were they actually contemporaries, living and working together. It is interesting to note how far their lives did run together, with the possibility of companionship, and the fine emulation which comes, with friendly personal intercourse, between men pursuing the same object. I have made a little scale which will show this at a glance. The three vertical lines divide the centuries.

It will be seen that Da Vinci was a young man, just come of age, when Michael Angelo and Titian

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

were born. Then Raphael followed very quickly, so that Angelo and Titian and Raphael were boys together ; and when Correggio was added to the group they were but lads still. No doubt the four youngsters regarded Da Vinci as a very old fellow indeed.

In looking back upon the evolution of Art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries one is reminded of the building of a great cathedral. It is not every architect who, like Sir Christopher Wren, lives to see the completion of his design. St. Peter's, at Rome, was planned by Bramante as a Greek cross, and the first stone was laid with great pomp in 1506. What would Bramante say if he could see it now ? When Raphael was appointed architect, he changed the Greek into a Latin cross. A little later, Peruzzi, who succeeded Raphael, restored the Greek form ; a little later still, another architect, San Gallo, changed it back to the Latin. Greek and Latin—Latin and Greek—so the changes were rung, until Michael Angelo restored the foundations to the original design of Bramante. But even this was not to be the end. In the Decadence which followed, the nave was again lengthened to the proportions we see to-day. It was thus with the Renaissance of Art. It was marked by changes corresponding to the evolution of a great edifice. Its foundations were laid by

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Da Vinci, on the finest lines of scholarship and scientific knowledge. A new splendour came upon it through the impassioned imagination of Michael Angelo. It was enriched with colour through the palette of Titian. It became more lovely through the tenderness and grace of Correggio—more stately and balanced through the completeness of Raphael. The movement was not always at the same impetus, nor in the same direction, but it was always forward—and it began with Leonardo. That is to say, the foundations were well laid, and the building was watched with intelligent eyes.

Let me now complete the simile. If the evolution of the Renaissance may be compared to the building of a cathedral, I think the study of the life of one of its great painters may be counted as a visit to the cathedral itself. How shall we best explore its mysteries? We may enter by a little door, leading to a narrow aisle—where we may come upon some lovely piece of sculpture, graceful arch, or jewelled window. Then we may discover transept and choir, and hidden shrine, seeing more and more of the splendour of the architecture as we advance, until, looking towards the East from the extreme length of the nave, we see finally how God and man have wrought together—man, in perfecting the design—God, in illuminating it with His own sunshine. Or, if the great

AN IMPRESSIONIST SKETCH

west door stands open, we may pass, in a moment, from the noise, and gloom, and confusion of the street, to the stillness, and glory, and order of the finest creation of the human mind. Come, then let us go straight to the heart of Da Vinci, and learn at once what we may expect to find in the record of his life.

A child without a mother—a child in his father's house from which the mother is banished.

A youth well educated—clever and studious—surrounded with many brothers and sisters.

An apprentice in the workshop of a famous artist—teaching his master how to paint.

A young man of extraordinary distinction—alike for personal beauty and for intellectual force—singing his own verses to the lute as an improvisatore.

The companion and friend of princes—apparelled as a god, in garments of rose-colour, and with his hair flowing to his waist.

The leader of the most advanced School of Art—while other painters are scarcely emancipated from the restraints and traditions of fresco and mosaic.

An engineer, an architect, a sculptor, a poet, a painter, a musician, a philosopher, a voluminous writer, the founder of a great Academy.

A son, ministering to his unhappy mother in

LEONARDO DA VINCI

her necessity ; and, although for himself rejecting Catholic dogma, securing for her the last rites of the Church.

A man of whom there is no record that he ever loved a woman.

A Master of the Ceremonies at Court—following the fortunes of a Royal House rather than the fortunes of his country.

An Italian—exiled from Italy—dying in the arms of a French king.

What is it that draws men into the profession of Art ? Da Vinci was the founder of a famous Academy, but in his early days there were no schools of art, such as we have to-day, nor exhibitions of the works of contemporary painters, to which young eyes turn, as flowers turn to the light. The encouragement of Art was limited to the patronage of princes and nobles of great wealth, who found place for the artist in their retinues—or to ecclesiastics, who adorned their churches with painting and sculpture. To understand a painter thoroughly, and his works, it is necessary to consider the conditions under which he worked ; and the conditions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were very different from anything within our experience in the twentieth. Occasionally, in reading old books, we come upon glimpses of the past, which seem like revelations, as if a curtain

BENVENUTO CELLINI

was drawn aside, or a door suddenly opened, through which we hear voices, and see strange things. Thus in the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, a contemporary of Da Vinci—though he was but a young man when Leonardo died—we see as in a flash of light the relation which at that time existed between an artist and his patron. Benvenuto, having designed a salt-cellar, which delighted the King of France, determined to leave Ferrara, where he had been employed by the Duke, and to journey to Paris in the hope of obtaining an appointment by the great Francis. “There is nothing good in Ferrara,” he exclaims—“the gentry are exceedingly avaricious, and rapacious after the property of others—there is nothing good in Ferrara, except the peacocks, of which I am tired.” He finds the King at Fontainebleau, and with him his old friend, the Cardinal. Francis the First moves in great state, with a retinue of more than twelve thousand horses ; and the sculptor dances attendance on the Court, from time to time entreating the Cardinal to bring his request before His Majesty.

At length the King summons the sculptor to his presence, talks with him in a free and easy manner, and commissions him to develop his talents in works of gold and silver more important than salt-cellar. Moreover the King offers him a salary of three hundred crowns a year. To this Benvenuto

LEONARDO DA VINCI

vouchsafes no reply. He is "half angry, half grieved, wholly provoked"—but he has his little plan—and the scene changes.

After a restless night Cellini rises very early in the morning and saddles his horse. He will go to the Holy Land. The Holy Land is a good way off from Fontainebleau—but he will go—and at once. He recalls an old vow that he had made when he was the Pope's prisoner in S. Angelo, and had nothing to read all day but the Bible, and—as he says—had spoken with God for awhile. He had promised to visit the Holy Sepulchre. He will never work again at any figure save that of Christ. It shall be three cubits high and as lovely as Christ was when he saw Him in a vision. He is already on the way—two miles! It is a most delightful path—through a wood. He will make forty miles that day. It will be impossible for anyone to overtake him—when lo! three horsemen!

"I command you in the King's name to repair to him immediately," says the messenger.

"I am on my way to the Holy Land," replies Benvenuto, resolutely, "and I refuse to return."

"Then I have the King's command to bind you hand and foot, and take you as his prisoner."

The word "prisoner" was sufficient. Cellini had experienced enough of that in Rome, and he quietly turned his horse's head towards Fontainebleau—and the King.

ANNEXING AN ARTIST

He had not very far to go—a quarter of an hour's run—and the Cardinal was at the door. "Our most Christian King," said the Cardinal, "has of his own accord assigned you the same salary that he gave to the renowned Leonardo—seven hundred crowns a year. He will also pay you over and above for everything you execute for him, and will make you a present of five hundred crowns to-day, if you stir not hence!" Benvenuto Cellini had no desire to stir thence. The prison—and the Sepulchre—could wait.

Seven hundred crowns a year, then, with special payment for special work, was the basis of Da Vinci's arrangement with the French King. But he did not attain that position all at once. He served many masters in his time—Lorenzo the Magnificent, Sforza the Duke of Milan, Louis the Twelfth, Cæsar Borgia, Francis the First. Lorenzo was the first to take him into his service, allotting to the young painter a studio in the gardens of the Medici at Florence. There Da Vinci found a collection of the antique statues which had been recently discovered. These relics of Greek art no doubt awakened in him, as afterwards in Michael Angelo, a new sense of beauty. But for Leonardo as a child there were no "old masters" to be worshipped. Perugino, Botticelli, and Ghirlandaio, were children about his own age. Fra Angelico,

LEONARDO DA VINCI

who painted nothing but angels in the monastery of Fiesole, on the hills overlooking the town, had died in Leonardo's infancy. Even in his own Florence there was little to inspire him, except Brunelleschi's cathedral which had just been consecrated, and Giotto's Tower.

Far away, indeed, there were known to be artists of great fame. At Venice the two brothers, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, were painting for the Doge; and one of them, Gentile, it appears, for the Sultan at Constantinople—for Venice was not then at war with the Turk. It was whispered that His Majesty—Mahomet the Second—in order to demonstrate to Bellini that he had committed a blunder in the anatomy of the severed head of John the Baptist—then and there, in the presence of the painter, cut off the head of a slave who happened to be standing within reach of his scimitar. I wonder whether this inquisitiveness of the Sultan troubled the young Leonardo. It is said to have troubled the gentle Gentile very greatly: for the older of the old masters had not been accustomed to enquire too particularly into the interior arrangements of the human frame. They took a great deal for granted.

Da Vinci, however, did not take anything for granted. At a later period he fully acknowledged his indebtedness to the painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but he did not follow

HERCULES AND APOLLO

them as his guides. "No one," he says, "will ever be a great painter who takes as his guide the paintings of other men. Giotto was brought up amongst the hills, with goats for his companions, yet Nature compelled him to be an artist, and Masaccio proved by the perfection of his work that Nature is the Mistress of all the Masters."

Da Vinci, then, according to his own account, became an artist because he was led, or driven, into the studio by Nature. He became a great artist because he thought for himself, refusing to be trammelled by the conventionalisms of the Schools. Even as a lad he was counted a prodigy of learning. When, in 1470, at the age of eighteen, he entered the workshop of Verrocchio, he had already "confounded" his tutor with unsolvable mathematical problems—and, "being a youth of exalted imagination, had learned to sing to the lute most divinely, improvising at the same time both words and music." That is Vasari's account of the young man. Moreover, he is said to have been "as strong as Hercules, and as beautiful as Apollo."

As strong as Hercules and as beautiful as Apollo—the expression is an echo of conversations heard by Vasari in the studios of Florence and Rome. The antique statues—the Apollo Belvedere, and the Hercules Farnese—had just come to light,

LEONARDO DA VINCI

after a burial of more than a thousand years, and the young painter—beautiful to look upon, accomplished beyond other men of his age, and endowed with great physical strength—appears to have justified the comparison. I am half inclined to drop the “Da Vinci” altogether—for after all that was his name only by adoption—and know him for the future simply as Apollo. No doubt Verrocchio felt that he had a young god amongst his disciples, and rejoiced accordingly.

But presently things assumed a different aspect. The young genius passed from confounding the tutor who taught him arithmetic, to confounding the master who taught him to paint. And of this Andrea Verrocchio did not quite approve. In his chagrin at finding himself surpassed by a “mere child” he resolved to abandon painting for the rest of his life.

Regarded simply as an ebullition of temper, or jealousy, the incident was not worth recording. But it leads to something more than that—to something higher and better. Let us turn to the picture itself—the very picture in which the child “confounded” the old man—and see how Leonardo stands, not so much in relation to his master as to his mistress—Art. I know no instance in which the transition or evolution of Art is more visibly expressed. The kneeling angels might be



Alinari

PLATE IX. TWO ANGELS BY DA VINCI
IN THE ACCADEMIA, FLORENCE

A MERE CHILD

the work of Giotto, or Fra Angelico—better drawn ; they might be from the pencil of Raphael or Correggio—with less mastery of technique. They are neither. They are of the transition. They are Da Vinci of Da Vinci.

These two beautiful figures are, as I said, a fragment only of a picture. It was the custom of the masters to employ their pupils and assistants upon the great mural decorations which they designed, and these angels were Leonardo's contribution to Verrocchio's painting of the Baptism of our Lord. It was a good beginning. If Leonardo was a mere child, as Vasari says, at the time—what shall we expect of him when he comes to his full strength ? To the beauty of Apollo, and the strength of Hercules, will he now add the wisdom of Jove ? We cannot expect more of him than he appears to have expected of himself. Dr. Richter, in his delightful life of Da Vinci, gives an amusing letter from the young man to his patron, the Duke of Milan, recommendatory of himself. It is too long to transcribe, but a brief summary will afford at least a glimpse of the confidence with which he set forth in life. He writes :—

“ 1. I can construct bridges, very light, and easy to carry—or a stronger kind to resist fire and assault, that will put the enemy to flight. I know ways also for destroying those of the enemy.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

2. In case of investing a place I know how to remove water, and make scaling ladders and other instruments.

3. I have a way of ruining any fortress which is not on stone foundations.

4. I can also make cannon which will discharge inflammable matters, and strike great terror into the enemy by their smoke.

5. By winding passages underground I can contrive a way under rivers.

6. I can construct engines which will crash through the enemies' ranks, so that the infantry may follow without impediment.

7. I can construct cannon to be not only useful but beautiful.

8. I can make catapults, mangonels, and things hitherto unknown, and contrive endless means of destruction.

9. And if the fight should be at sea—(*sicut ante*)

10. In time of peace, I can equal any man in architecture and engineering.

11. Then I can execute sculpture, in marble, or bronze, or terra-cotta ; also I can do as much in painting as any other, be he who he may.

12. Moreover (and this is perhaps the finest touch of all) I would engage to make an equestrian statue to the lasting memory of your father."

And he did it too ! That is where the delight of the thing comes in. He did it. For the Duke

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER

took him at his word. Da Vinci built bridges ; circumvented rivers ; made cannon beautiful for ever ; even the equestrian statue came off, and was counted the wonder of Milan, for it was twenty-six feet high, and stood under a triumphal arch—which, of course, must have been higher still. Michael Angelo laughed at it a little—but then Michael Angelo was a rude Republican, while Da Vinci went with the King. Even that, however, was not all ; Da Vinci was appointed “ Master of the Ceremonies ” to the Duke, and—*he painted a picture*. It reads a little like the old epitaph on the lady, famous for all the virtues, who was “ deeply religious ; also she painted in water colours and sent several pictures to the exhibition. She was first cousin to Lady Jones ; and of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Did Michael Angelo laugh ? Yes. But not at Da Vinci’s picture—nor is the laugh against Da Vinci now.

The equestrian statue, however, did not stand under its triumphal arch very long. Before the close of the century, in spite of the “ beautiful cannon ” and the smoke of its burning, Louis of France, the twelfth Louis, had taken the city ; Milan was annexed to the French crown ; the horse and his rider had become “ a target for Gascon archers.” It is true that a little later the French were driven out by the Spaniards, but Da Vinci

LEONARDO DA VINCI

did not live to see the deliverance. If he had seen it I suppose he would scarcely have rejoiced, for he had become the friend of Louis. Ah, the changes ! Italy is free now, and an Italian painter would no more take service under a French usurper than under a Spanish. The changes—did I say ? What is left of Leonardo's Milan ? Only a cathedral and a painting on a convent wall ! The cathedral has been badly finished. It is hidden by a ghastly structure, known as the West Front, built by another French King—Napoleon. The painting has almost perished. Is it for this that Hercules is strong and Apollo beautiful ? Is it for this that youth grows into manhood, and that kingdoms are annexed ? Let us forget for a moment the smoke of the cannon—the bridges—the infernal machines—and the annexations, while we look at Da Vinci's painting of the *Cenacolo* in the Refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, at Milan.

The subject of the picture is not new. It is, indeed, one of the oldest that has ever been chosen by Christian painters. We find it in the catacombs of Rome, amongst the frescoes of the second century—twelve men, seated at a table, with One in their midst. Before Da Vinci's time it had become the favourite decoration for the refectory of a convent or monastery. Da Vinci's picture



PLATE X. THE CHRIST OF DA VINCI

FROM A DRAWING IN THE
ACCADEMIA, MILAN

TO THE
LIBRARY OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

THE CHRIST OF DA VINCI

fills the end wall of the chamber, raised a little above the dado, so that every one seated at table may see it. It is the grace before meat of every feast. In one of the earliest of the frescoes of the catacombs our Lord is placed as in Da Vinci's picture, with six of the disciples at each side. There is nothing original in that. Moreover, Da Vinci has taken the Likeness of Christ, as well as the curly beard of Peter, and the beardless face of John, direct from these first records of Christian Art. But the faces of the Twelve were not all known to the worshippers in the catacombs, any more than they were known to the monks of Milan. Da Vinci had to imagine them for himself. His conception of them is, perhaps, the highest—it is certainly one of the highest—achievements known in the world of Art. In the ancient fresco ten of the figures are alike, our Lord, St. John, and St. Peter alone being distinguished by any attempt at portraiture. Da Vinci discriminated between character and character. There was the impetuous Peter ; there was Thomas, who once doubted ; there were James, and Jude—the Lord's kinsmen. How should these receive the words which must have pierced them to the heart ? “ One of you shall betray me.” If it needs a great painter to represent this with living force, it needs a great poet to describe it in words.

The poet Goëthe has rendered us this service.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

I have not space in which to give Noehden's translation of the passage. Moreover, I do not accept in every case Goëthe's interpretation. But, availing myself of the poet's insight, I will follow the beautiful line of thought he has indicated, confessing that if I have varied it for the worse the fault is mine, the merit is Goëthe's.

Note, then, how the Twelve are divided into groups—corresponding with their known relations to each other. Next to Christ—on his right—are John, and Peter, and Judas. This is the first group.

Peter has risen from his seat, and vehemently protests. He forgets that he carries a sword—and that it touches Iscariot—the very sword which a few hours later, at Christ's command, he shall put back into its sheath. Judas, conscience-stricken, shrinks from the Master. See, in his sudden movement of terror he has overturned a vessel, and the salt lies scattered on the table—but he still clutches the purse in his hand. Peter lays his hand on John's shoulder, who bends towards him to listen. The quiet of John's true heart is expressed by the folding of his hands.

On the left of our Lord is a second group. James is the son of the Virgin's sister, and Da Vinci has expressed this in the likeness of his features to Christ. James is a prophet also, and



Alinari

PLATE XI. THE CENACOLO. LEONARDO DA VINCI

S. MARIA DELLE GRAZIE, MILAN

NO. 1111
ANNALS

THE CENACOLO

stretches out his arms in amazement and terror, as one who sees with his eyes the terrible things which shall be. Thomas leans over towards the Saviour, raising his finger as if in remonstrance—the finger which shall some day touch the wounded side and be satisfied. Philip bends forward also, his hands clasped to his heart. He is saying, “It is not I, Lord. It is not I, Thou knowest.”

Then the third group—on the extreme left of our Lord. Matthew turns eagerly to his two companions, stretching out his arms in passionate appeal. With what consummate art this simple action unites the groups! James, the son of Zebedee, betrays doubt and suspicion, and his eyes are turned towards Judas, as though he were saying, “Did I not always suspect? Did I not tell you?” Simon, the oldest of the disciples, is troubled and full of thought. Each of the three in some subtle form conveys the idea that Iscariot is in their thoughts.

In the fourth group we see Bartholomew, standing at the end of the table, upon which he leans his hands, looking anxiously towards Matthew and Simon, as though he would cry out to them “What shall we answer to the Lord?” Jude—the brother of James, recognisable again by his likeness to Christ, this time in profile—lays his hand on Peter, as Peter lays his on John, so that with Andrew and Bartholomew the five are linked to-

LEONARDO DA VINCI

gether apart from Judas. Andrew expresses with half-lifted arms and out-spread hands the fixed horror with which he is seized.

What is the latest achievement in modern impressionism compared with this? What is the "square touch" that we should desire it, if it is to forfeit for us the realization through Art of the passion of our lives? There are men who tell us that stories must not be told in Art—that stories must be told only by poets and novelists. The blueness of the sky; the purple of shadows cast by the sun; the texture of linen, fine or coarse; these are the things to which the painter is now invited to limit himself. Da Vinci has taught us a higher lesson. He has taught us that if, where God is, there are angels—so, where Christ is, there are men. He has shown us that love can be painted, as surely as sunshine; hate, as surely as shadow; and that the highest impressionism is not the impression made by a brushmark, but the imprint of the divine nature on our hearts.

Da Vinci's picture was finished towards the close of the century, and then he was driven by the clash of arms, from Milan, and the great school he had founded was scattered. Scattered, but not destroyed. He visited Venice, where he must have met the young Titian, who was already filling the world with his praise. In 1501 he visited Urbino,

IN EXILE

where Raphael was a lad of eighteen. Then he travelled through Siena, Orvieto, Perugia, Ravenna, and along the shores of the Adriatic, as engineer of that terrible scourge of Italy—Cæsar Borgia. Next year he was at Florence, renewing his old quarrel with Michael Angelo. In 1504 he returned to Milan, by that time under the rule of the French ; and in 1519 he died in exile, at the Château Cloux, near Amboise, which had been allotted to him as a residence by his friend the new King, Francis the First.

The life of Da Vinci was not a happy life. A cloud hung over it from his infancy. Leonardo was one of many children—he speaks of eleven brothers and sisters — but although brought up with them in his father's house, and allowed to bear his father's name, his mother was not recognised as one of the family. This was for the boy a sadder fate than that which befel Raphael, who, losing his mother, the gentle Magia, by death, still retained for her the tenderest memories. Da Vinci, however, never abandoned the unhappy Caterina. He alone of all her kith and kin visited her in her misery, and rendered her the last services of affection. If many candles and much incense can carry a soul to heaven, Caterina is safe. How far all this coloured Da Vinci's life cannot now be estimated. We read of

LEONARDO DA VINCI

no passionate outburst, such as we find in the lives of most painters ; no love story as in the life of Raphael ; no pathetic surrender of love to honour, as in the life of Michael Angelo ; no bereavement of wife or child like that of Titian ; no revolt from the religion of his fathers, like that of Correggio. Even the lightning of the Reformation, which flashed over Europe in his time, left him unscathed—content to be a philosopher rather than a religionist. If Leonardo Da Vinci had been called upon to describe the issue of his life's work, I think he would have defined it as from first to last the fine flower of fine scholarship.

It was in his French home that Da Vinci designed his last great picture, the St. Anna with the Virgin. The picture itself, if ever finished, counts as one more of the lost treasures of Art. But the design for it is preserved in our Royal Academy in London. Through the courtesy of the President and Council I reproduce it here. The beautiful heads of mother and daughter are finely characteristic of the painter. As in the "Last Supper" he has given to the Lord's two cousins the reflex of the likeness of Christ, so in the lovely face of Anna we find the reflex of the face of Mary. I think Leonardo must have been reading those lines of Dante in the Paradiso—for Dante was to the painters of the Renaissance what



PLATE XII. THE VIRGIN AND HER MOTHER
FROM A DRAWING BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

TO THE
LIBRARY

HIS LAST PAINTING

Shakespeare is to us—where he describes the Mother of our Lord amidst the chorus of the redeemed. The saintly company have passed into the light which makes the Creator visible to the creature. They are singing. The sound is so glad that Dante cries—

It is the Bride of God, who has arisen
With matins to her spouse that he may love her.
Behold the hosts
Of Christ's triumphal march, and all the fruits
Harvested by the rolling of the years.

It is amidst these hosts that he sees Anna seated—

So well content to look upon her daughter,
That her eyes move not even while she sings.

That is what Da Vinci has expressed with infinite sweetness and grace, in this, the loveliest of his drawings.

And yet the real secret of Da Vinci's greatness as a painter does not lie in the grace of sweetness—in which Correggio excelled, nor in imaginative strength—in which he was surpassed by Michael Angelo. How shall Apollo be one and the same with Hercules? It was Hercules who violated Apollo's shrine. The truth is that painting is an affair of the heart, and of the brain, and of the perceptive faculties. Beauty alone will not satisfy

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Art, nor will imagination. Beauty and strength are great gifts, but they are not everything. Both Apollo and Hercules were sons of Jupiter, and yet Apollo was driven from Olympus, and Hercules died miserably, because his wife gave him a shirt not properly aired.

I know that this is not Ovid's way of telling the story of the Shirt of Nessus. He calls it a tunic, and says that it was poisoned. But it is the same thing. Besides, Ovid only received the story second-hand—and I have as much right to my interpretation as he had. I wish I could be as sure in my estimate of the relation in which Leonardo Da Vinci stands to the Renascence of Art as I am of the cause of Alcides's death. But unfortunately it is not possible to make a just comparison between Leonardo's work and that of his great contemporaries. The paintings of Michael Angelo and of Correggio may be counted by the score—of Titian and Raphael by the hundred ; but of Da Vinci's there remain only nine of which we can affirm with any certainty that they came from his hand. And of these the chief, the *Cenacolo* in the refectory at Milan, is a mere wreck. And yet one thing is certain. The man who was master of all the sciences—anatomy, botany, chemistry, acoustics, optics, dynamics, statics, geology—the man who was architect, engineer,

LIGHT IN THE STUDIO

alchemist, poet, grammarian, satirist, musician, sculptor—the man who, after four hundred years, is recognised with Bacon as one of the founders of the inductive philosophy—whose theories on matter are still counted as revelations of physical truths—whose speculations on the relation of matter to mind stand on a level with the highest that have yet been formulated—this man, this Leonardo Da Vinci, passing from the laboratory of the philosopher to the studio of the painter, was indeed like Herakles approaching the shrine of Delphi—not to desecrate it by plunder, but to enrich it with new gifts.

And the gods approved. Apollo made no resistance, nor did Jupiter stay his course. Leonardo Da Vinci irradiated the studio with the light of the intellectual life.

MICHAEL ANGELO



FRA TE DOMENICANINO. *What do you want with me in the Sistine Chapel?*

MICHAEL ANGELO. *To paint you.*

IL 'CANINO. *How much will you pay me?*

ANGELO. *A scudo a day—or more.*

IL 'CANINO. *Why have you chosen me from all the Frari to paint?*

ANGELO. *Because I am painting a devil driving lost souls out of Paradise, and do not wish to trust entirely to my imagination.*

IL 'CANINO. *I will come.*

(EXIT FRA DOMENICANINO.)

A MESSENGER. *But men should be as the gods.*

ANGELO. *I do not always find them so.*





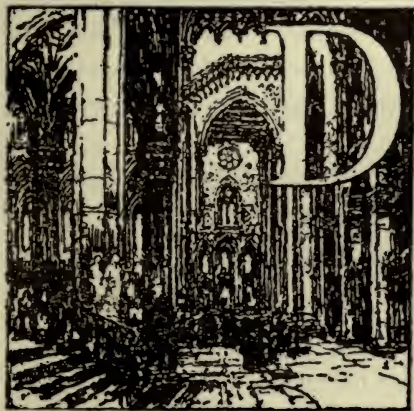
Hanfsaengl

M. B. Cagnio

PLATE XIII. FROM A PAINTING
IN THE UFFIZI, FLORENCE

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE

MICHAEL ANGELO



DO great men make stirring events? or do stirring events make great men? When Michael Angelo began his life at Castel Caprese, a little Tuscan village, in 1475, the times were stirring indeed. Italy, di-

vided by civil war, rivalled the witches' cauldron in Macbeth. "Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf" are as nothing compared to the "hell-broth" which was brewing there. With the "Dominicans" ravaging the flock in Rome; with Savonarola strangled and burnt in the streets of Florence;

MICHAEL ANGELO

with Louis of France besieging Milan ; with Cæsar Borgia drowning his brother in the Tiber ; with Venice and Spain in league against Naples ; with one Pope poisoned by drinking of the cup he had prepared for his friend ; with another preaching a war of extermination in the East ; with Torquemada practising extermination in the West ; with the Printing Press flashing its lightnings from the North ; with Luther thundering at the doors of the Vatican ;—it seems an odd thing that Art should come upon the scene. And yet at this crisis, in the very midst of the hurly-burly, three boys are born, who—together with Da Vinci to lead and Correggio to follow—shall complete the roll-call of the five greatest painters the world has known.

Perhaps it is the old story of the darkness of night making the brightness of the stars. But I think not. The day has come, and these stars are still shining in the heavens. They are like—

The crowne which Ariadnè wore
Upon her ivory forehead—
Being now placèd in the firmament.

Moreover, the light which falls from them has solved again the old riddle which we could never have solved for ourselves any more than did the Philistines—"Out of Strength came forth Sweetness." For what is stronger than the Sword of

LEARNING TO SEE

civil war, or the sleuth-hounds of the Inquisition ?
—and what is sweeter than the Madonna and
Child of the Renaissance ?

Let us now ask ourselves a straight question. Are our own lives complete unless we take into them the spirit of the lives of the great painters ? I plead for the study of Art through the study of the *mind* of the artist. The mind of the true artist is at the same time the simplest and the most complex. The simplest, because it deals with nothing except as a unity ; the most complex, because this unity must contain everything. We cannot all attend Schools of Art, or draw from the antique, or paint from the life ; but we can all learn to see the soul—and to see the soul of Michael Angelo might be worth more to some of us than all the drawings from the antique, or studies from the life, that Schools of Art can produce. How shall the lover of Art know the full splendour of his mistress' eyes if he never ventures to lift her veil ? How shall we understand the paintings in the Sistine Chapel, if we know nothing of Michael Angelo's thoughts about the *Dies Iræ* ? There is a quaint legend, narrated by Theodore Watts-Dunton as one which Rossetti, the painter-poet, loved to repeat. When our first parents were driven from Paradise, God—always tempering judgment with mercy—made dim within their minds the memory of that blissful place. And

MICHAEL ANGELO

when sons and daughters were born to them, these were content with their heritage, not knowing what they had lost—and Eve was content with their contentment. But after many years of a mother's joys and sorrows, Eve gave birth to a child unlike the others—and her heart was troubled. For this child would be found listening with rapt face to strains of divine music uncaught by Eve's ear now, and in his eyes she saw waving branches that she remembered now to be the long-forgotten trees of Eden.

Now to read the life of Michael Angelo is to understand the legend. Do we not forget? Are not poets and painters born amongst us that we may see and remember? If our sight is dim for these things, and our memory fails—is it not well for us to look into the eyes of such men?

Michael Angelo Buonarroti was born in 1475, of a good family, at Castel Caprèse, near Arezzo. He was put to nurse to the wife of a stone-carver; and long years afterwards he told Vasari, who was born in the same district, that if his mind was good for anything he owed it to the clear air of the country, and to the milk he sucked while learning the use of mallet and chisel. The boy was sent to school at Florence, but made little progress in book-learning; and at the age of thirteen was apprenticed to Ghirlandaio—who was then en-

THE GARLAND MAKER

gaged upon the frescoes of the church of the Dominicans—Santa Maria Novella. Ghirlandaio, I say, though that was not really his name. How many of the painters of Italy ever did bear their real names? His name was Bigordi, and “Ghirlandaio” simply means “the maker of garlands.” The finest garland Ghirlandaio ever made he now wears himself, in being accounted the Master of Buonarroti.

It is again the old story of Verrocchio and Da Vinci—master and pupil—“The youngster knows more than I.” In the studio of Ghirlandaio the lad displayed such extraordinary virility that he is said to have had no infancy in Art. He did not even complete his apprenticeship, but while still a child passed to the care of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who educated him with his own sons. It was in the old studio in the Gardens of the Medici, which five and twenty years before had been allotted to Leonardo Da Vinci, that Michael Angelo, in his turn, studied the antique. The stress and strain of life came upon him more swiftly than upon most children, for in this companionship with the Medici he met the greatest spirits of the age, who graced the court of “The Father of Letters.” But the young man proved worthy of the affection of Lorenzo, and returned it. These happy days laid the foundation of his life’s work on the finest lines of truth and honour.

MICHAEL ANGELO

But I am not writing the life of Michael Angelo. My purpose is rather to consider the relation in which he stands to the Art of the Renaissance, to his companions, to the age in which he lived. For this, something more is necessary than the recording of incidents and dates. If I were the idlest of idle fellows, or the busiest of busy men, or the hardest worked parson or lawyer or doctor in the land, I would not be content without I could claim *participamènto* with a mind so fine as his. In my journey to London every morning I would take in my hand a talisman, in the shape of a book, by virtue of which the train should carry me through the village where Michael Angelo was born, to Florence where he was educated. I should pass Santa Maria Novella on the way, and look in at Ghirlandaio's studio. The campanile of Westminster, seen through the mist, would serve as Giotto's tower. The Old Kent Road would lie under the Surrey Hills as the narrow streets of Bologna lie under the shadow of the Apennines. Our beautiful Thames would remind me of Venice where the silent highways are—or were—as of crystal. And then, at some hour of the day, I would contrive to visit the National Gallery, and stand for a little while before his last great work—it is but a fragment, for the brush fell from his hand before it was finished. Finally, on my way home, I would take the book in my hand again,



Hanfstaeng?

PLATE XIV. HOLY FAMILY

FROM A PAINTING BY MICHAEL ANGELO
IN THE UFFIZI, FLORENCE

PARTICIPAMÈNTO

instead of the evening paper, and visit the marble quarries of Carrara, where Michael Angelo was engineer ; inspect the fortifications of Florence, where he was soldier ; follow his grave footsteps into the Sistine Chapel, where he was painter ; linger with him over his books, for he was poet and scholar ; observe his mastery of mallet and chisel, for he was sculptor ; examine his model for the dome of St. Peter's, of which he was architect ; and through all this I should learn to love and reverence the man for his integrity, his filial tenderness, his fraternal faithfulness, his kindness to dependants, his loyalty to duty. Perhaps I might even understand his meaning when he wrote : " Borne away upon a fragile bark, amidst a stormy sea, I am reaching the common haven to which every man must come, to give account of the evil and good he has done. Now I see how my soul fell into the error of making Art her sovereign lord. Thoughts of love, and fond fancies, what will become of you when I approach a double death—one certain, the other threatening. Neither painting nor sculpture will then avail to calm my soul. I turn to Thee, O God."

By this time I should have reached home, and dinner would be upon the table. But I should have had a day with Michael Angelo ; and should ask the friend who sat next to me : " Have you read M. Clement's book ? "

MICHAEL ANGELO

Angelo, the Painter—Angelo, the Sculptor—Angelo, the Architect—which was the greatest? Happily it is not necessary for us to determine. Let us be content to see a little of his work in each of these three phases.

The Sculptor shall come first—for his life begins with it. He was scarcely out of his teens when he made the "Sleeping Cupid." It was so beautiful that he was advised to bury it, so as to give it the appearance of age, and then to dig it up and send it to Rome as a newly discovered antique. The thing was done, and Cardinal San Giorgio was deceived; but Michael Angelo was not a party to the fraud. The Cardinal, who had purchased the statue, received his money again in full; and satisfied as to the integrity of the young sculptor, invited him to Rome.

In Rome, under his chisel, marble began to live. While yet in the vigour of youth, he had become famous. The Pièta, now in St. Peter's, the figures in the Library of the Duomo at Siena, the Adonis of the Uffizi, the Cupid at South Kensington, were all of this period. But it was at Florence that he achieved his greatest triumph in sculpture. There lay in the city, near the church of Santa Maria Novella, a huge block of marble. It was suitable for one purpose only—the carving of a colossal statue. Sculptor after sculptor had tried their

AS A SCULPTOR

hands upon it, but without success. Indeed, after a time the attempt had been abandoned. Incompetent hands had hewed and hacked the enormous mass of stone, until it was worse than shapeless—it was misshapen. At last Michael Angelo was commissioned to take it in hand. What a task lay before him! Within the misshapen outline of that block of marble lay potentially the true, the divine beauty of form, if only he could conceive it.

Michael Angelo began by building a house over the stone; and in that house he shut himself up for eighteen months with his great task, permitting no one to see what he was doing. At length the statue was finished, the citizens were admitted, and lo! the figure of David—the sublime figure which is now one of the glories of Florence.

The story is so well known that I should not repeat it, were it not in itself, like one of the old miracle plays, a “mystery” with a “revelation.” It is a true story, but it is nevertheless a parable. Like the block of marble, Art had been lying dead for more than a thousand years. The painters of the Awakening had sought to give it shape. Fra Angelico had perhaps seen something of the divine beauty into which it might be fashioned. But it was the Renaissance that gave it life—the new life—the life by virtue of which it has, like David, slain the giants.

MICHAEL ANGELO

But Michael Angelo had still to reckon with the critics. The critics we have always with us, and this figure of David has proved a *boccata* to them. One assures us that "it surpasses all other statues, ancient or modern;" that it is "divine;" that "never before or since has there been produced so fine an attitude, so perfect a grace, such beauty of head, and feet and hands." Another declares "that the figure is an outrage on ordinary human proportions; that the parts belong neither to each other nor to the body, and that the head, the neck, the feet, the hands, are alike monstrous." A third critic, with a caution which contrasts finely with the confidence of his fellows, assures us that it is indeed "a grand statue," but that its grandness is the "grandeur of spirit."

Now Michael Angelo had a way of his own in dealing with the critics. When the David was finished there was a "private view," and the chief of the Republic of Florence came to inspect the statue. The Gonfaloniere thought—he *thought*, mind—he merely threw out the suggestion—he *thought* that the nose was—well, perhaps the nose was a *leetle* (or its equivalent in the dialect of the time) a *leetle* too large for perfect beauty. Have we not heard it a thousand times? Do we not read it every day in the Press? Michael Angelo ascended the scaffold, and taking in his hand a chisel—which was very visible to the Gonfaloniere

THE SISTINE CHAPEL

—and a little marble dust—which was invisible—rubbed the dust gently upon the offending nose. No doubt a sprinkling of it fell into the Gonfaloniere's eyes. But it was enough, the critic was satisfied. "Admirable," exclaimed Solderini, as the sculptor descended. "What a quantity of stuff you have taken off—you have given the thing life." "But," says Michael Angelo, "it does not matter. It is the natural fate of critics to speak of things they do not understand." It never occurred to Michael Angelo's critic, in his satisfaction at the "quantity taken off" that as the real David had been delivered out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, so the statue of David was delivered out of the hand of the Philistine.

Angelo returned from Florence to Rome, and was soon engaged in the great work of his life—the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. He hesitated at first to attempt so stupendous a task, declaring to the Pope that he was a sculptor, not a painter. But Julius insisted, and the frescoes were begun in 1508. That very summer the young Raphael was summoned to Rome, and began his frescoes in the Loggia and Stanze of the Vatican. They were not very far apart in age—Angelo was thirty-three, and Raphael twenty-five. But how different were the two men in temperament! The

MICHAEL ANGELO

younger—joyous, frank, full of the delight of life ; the elder—taciturn, introspective, and troubled with anxious thought. Vasari tells us that when the scaffolding was prepared for Angelo in the Sistine Chapel he shut himself up—as he did in Florence when engaged upon the statue of David—permitting no assistant to enter, even to grind his colours or to prepare the walls with plaster. From daybreak till the darkness of evening fell upon his work he never left the place—sometimes even sleeping there throughout the night—content with a little food brought to him once only, at the close of day.

The subject of this great series of frescoes is the Creation, and Fall, and Redemption of Man. We see the Separation of Day and Night—the Gathering of the Waters—the Expulsion from Paradise—the Deluge—the Brazen Serpent—David and Goliath—Judith and Holofernes. The lunettes are filled with groups of the ancestors of Christ. Between the windows are colossal figures of the Prophets and Sibyls, who foretold the coming of the Saviour.

The Sibyls ! Does the word fall upon our ears like a false note in music. Who were the Sibyllæ, that they should figure in the decoration of a Christian temple ? What have they to do with



Anderson

PLATE XV. A SIBYL, FROM THE SISTINE CHAPEL

THE STORY OF SIBYL

the story of the Cross? Michael Angelo tells us in these frescoes. They are amongst the *dramatis personæ* of the great tragedy—or comedy—Dante called it a comedy but Michael Angelo is not quite sure which—of life. It began with the first fiat of Creation—"Let there be light," and it will end only with the final triumph of the redeemed, or the last wail of the damned as they are driven into Charon's boat. It is a curious medley of Pagan and Christian religious sentiment—but it is a drama from which no character or incident can be omitted. We of the twentieth century, who do not believe in Charon's boat—who believe nothing indeed unless we think it is proved—find it hard to understand the ready acceptance by the painters of the Renaissance of the strange sights which appear as nebulae on the horizon of Art. The nebula of the Sibyls, however, in Michael Angelo's vision is resolved into stars. We smile at the legend of the Sibylline books but we often find them useful when we would "point a moral or adorn a tale." Whether we regard the visit of Æneas to the "pale prophetess" at Cumæ as poetry, like the visit of Macbeth to the weird sisters of Fores—or as history, like that of Saul to the Witch of Endor—how delightful, and tender, and full of adventure, is the story as Virgil tells it in the third book of the *Æneid*. What a novel it would make for Mudie's—with incidents as pathetic

MICHAEL ANGELO

as the visit of Leonore to the old Colonel in the Newcomes—as stirring as the sacrifice of Sidney Carton in the Tale of Two Cities—as reconciliatory of philosophy and man, as were Roland and Austin in the Caxtons. Sibyl was the daughter of Tiresias, the Oracle of the temple of Thebes. I say Sibyl now, as Virgil does, rather than Sibyllæ, because it is her personality that is interesting, not the order to which she belongs. She is the true Hellenic type, as Dinah Morris is the English type, of a lovely woman who has seen too much of the gods. Not too much of God, but of the gods—the priests of the temple, the Methodist preacher, the squire parson—and must deliver her soul or die. When Apollo fell in love with her, she only asked that she might live as many years as there were grains of dust in her hand. Surely, a modest request. *We* ask for life everlasting. Sibyl's prayer was granted—but she had forgotten one thing. *We* forget a good many. She forgot to stipulate that she should retain her youth and beauty. Like Oliver Twist she should have asked for “more.” When Æneas saw her, seven hundred years afterwards, she was old and ugly, and had still three hundred years to live—for the grains of dust in her hand proved to be a thousand. Sibyl appears to have become a little incoherent as an Oracle—for Virgil calls her “the mad prophetess”—which is worse than calling her pale.

THE BENEDICITE IN FRESCO

She writes her predictions on loose leaves—fragments of papyrus I suppose—and arranges them carefully at the entrance to the cave. There they lie—until the wind blows!—and then—

She to the Fates commits her scattered verse
Nor sets in order what the winds disperse.

Sibyl mistakes Æneas for a ghost, and when he approaches in his shining armour, with his Trojan shield, she has scarcely strength to guide him to Avernus, on his way to the Elysian Fields—where he will be welcomed by Anchises, his aged father, whom he rescued from the flames. There also he will meet Achilles, and Pyrrhus, and Orestes, and Hector, and Andromache, and Helen's lovely daughter—who would not marry Pyrrhus—even though he had yellow hair, and Helen herself—whom she, Sibyl, hopes to see some day—when the weary round of those three hundred years have been accomplished.

But it is not for the sake of the beautiful verse of Virgil or Homer that the Sibyllæ take their place in the Chapel of the Vatican. They represent the tribute of the Pagan world to the Redeemer. Have we not the same thing in the poetry of the Church? Do we not sing hymns that claim the universe for God—spiritual and material, animate and inanimate? “The king-

MICHAEL ANGELO

doms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." Is it, then, a strange thing to find the Benedicite in fresco, as well as in Latin? *Laudate Dominum in excelsis omnes angeli*. Yes—but it is not the angels alone who are to praise Him, it is *sol et luna*; and not only sun and moon, but *dracones et omnes abyssi*; and not only dragons and all deeps, but—here Michael Angelo's translation comes in—*Laudate Dominum, omnes sibyllæ*.

The Sibylline books form no part of our faith—they are declared to be forgeries of the second or third centuries. But the argument for their rejection is not flattering to the early Fathers of the Church. It is that they cannot be true because they speak so plainly of our Saviour, of His sufferings, and of His death, that they must have been written as a pious fraud, in order to convince the heathen of His divinity—just as His Likeness is said to have been invented in order to convince them of His humanity. There are, of course, spurious gospels, just as there are spurious likenesses—but before assuming that a so called prophecy written after the event is necessarily fraudulent, it may be worth while to consider whether it was written as a prophecy at all, or not rather as a poem. Look at the Lybian Sibyl. The book she carries is open before our eyes, and yet we can-



Anderson

PLATE XVI. THE CREATION

FROM THE FRESCO BY MICHAEL ANGELO
IN THE CEILING OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL

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THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS

not read it. Ah, if only we could turn the leaves, and tell what lies in the lap of the gods for the land of which she is the Oracle. For the Libyan Sibyl is the Oracle of Africa.

In the Sistine Chapel, however, the Sibyls have nothing to do with the future—they are only memories of the past. Let us turn to another of Michael Angelo's imaginings.

Adam lies prone upon the earth. God has made man, but has not yet breathed into him the breath of life. Now the Creator stretches out his hand, and with a touch the man lives. It is the old Promethean story—*Non vi—non dolo—sed dono*. Not, that is, by force, nor by fraud, but by free gift. Prometheus could make a man—of clay; but he could not make him live. He attempted to buy the divine flame—but Heaven cannot be bribed. He would have taken it by force—and was hurled from Olympus. The Creator is "The Word," and "The Word was made man." But not the Man of Sorrows. Around him, under the shadow of the Almighty, are the young-eyed cherubim—the symbol, that, is of the eternal renewing of youth. If there is a touch of paganism in all this, it is the paganism of the Renaissance. If it represents only the twilight of our Faith, it is not a twilight passing into darkness, but that which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

MICHAEL ANGELO

And as the work goes on, for five long years, the Pope begins to grow impatient, fearing that he will not live to see it finished ; and Raphael, from time to time, lays down his palette in the Stanza where he is painting, to come and see the new creation which is springing from Angelo's pencil. In 1512 the vaulting is complete, but the Pope is dead, and the great east wall, which was to be the crown and glory of the design, stands blank. It can wait. Leo, and Adrian, and Clement, follow Julius at the Vatican ; and die, as Julius died. But the wall waits. Da Vinci dies. Raphael dies. Correggio dies. Angelo and Titian alone of the five great painters remain, and they are both of them advanced in years. But the wall waits. At last, after waiting for more than twenty years, the scaffolding again creeps up from floor to ceiling ; and Michael Angelo, an old man now, is at work once more in the Sistine Chapel. " The Day of Judgment " is begun.

The fresco of the *Dies Iræ* fills the whole of the east end of the chapel, and contains myriads of figures. In the centre is our Lord, coming with clouds, which are rent asunder as he approaches—revealing Heaven beyond. On his right, clinging to his side, is the Mother. Around Him are the countless host of the redeemed—the patriarchs, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs—each with



Anderson

PLATE XVII. THE DIES IRÆ

FROM THE PAINTING BY MICHAEL
ANGELO IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

TO THE
ABORIGINAL

THE DIES IRÆ

His insignia of glory or of martyrdom. At his feet is the Recording Angel, and the angels whose trumpets shall wake the dead. The outcasts from Heaven are hurled headlong from His presence. They fall into the river of Death, where Charon's boat awaits them, and Charon with his oar dashes them to pieces like a potter's vessel. But the one figure which arrests attention is that of Christ. How shall that be described?

In approaching such a subject as the *Dies Ira* one must move with careful steps. Almost every writer seems to come with some preconceived idea, that gives a false bias to his judgment. One popular author describes the figure of Christ as "a thundering athlete—a nude, wrathful, giant, without one touch of pity or mercy in him"—and condemns it as partly the cause, and partly the effect, of the cruel, dark views of Christianity which prevailed in the sixteenth century. "What a chasm," he says, "separates the Christ of the Sistine Chapel, from the Fair Shepherd of the Catacombs." Yes, but then what a chasm separates also Heaven from Hell.

It is the common failure of amateur criticism to look for qualities in a work of art which are incompatible with the artist's primary intention. I have noticed that while every great painter in Christendom has represented our Lord under the same likeness, the question is perpetually raised

MICHAEL ANGELO

as to *which* of all the likenesses is most like. Of one picture it will be said that the eyes are too stern—forgetting that they are the eyes of Christ when he was rebuking the Pharisees. Of another, that the eyes are too tender—forgetting that they are the eyes of Christ comforting the women who wept to see Him fall beneath the cross. Of still another, that the face is passionless—forgetting that in it the eyes are fast closed in death. When Michael Angelo paints the Infant Saviour, caressed by Mary and Joseph, he represents him as a happy child. When he paints “The Word” as Creator, he expresses strength and benignity. When the dead Christ lies once more upon His mother’s knee, he shows “the pity of it.” When Christ rises to judge the world Michael Angelo represents him as the Avenger. Did the beloved disciple darken the imagination of Christendom? And yet he writes—“Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall bewail because of Him. Even so, come. Amen.” That is what Michael Angelo has painted.

But Michael Angelo did not reject the commonly received Likeness of our Blessed Lord. On the contrary he accepted it as the true Likeness, following it humbly in every particular. The head on plate XVIII. is from his last painting—The En-



PLATE XVIII. THE CHRIST OF MICHAEL ANGELO

FROM THE PAINTING IN
THE NATIONAL GALLERY

TO VINU
ANGOLIAO

THE CHRIST OF MICHAEL ANGELO

tombment, now in our National Gallery. Compare it with the Christ of the Veronicas, plate V. from St. Silvestro, Rome, and it will be seen that they are alike. Line for line a tracing of one is indistinguishable from a tracing of the other. Just as Da Vinci, in his fresco of the Last Supper, followed the earliest records of Christian Art, so Angelo takes as his model an old relic of the catacombs. Think of it! Michael Angelo searching for the Likeness of Christ, finds it, not in the splendid visions of his imagination, but in a rude drawing by an unknown artist, on a face-cloth taken from the grave of one of the first martyrs.

How is it then that this great painter, knowing the Likeness, and following it in all his other paintings and sculptures, in this one picture of the *Dies Iræ*, did not follow it? It is because the figure of Christ in the *Dies Iræ* is intended by him to be a symbol only. Looking back into the infinite past, or forward into the infinite future, the painter sees Christ—but sees no marks of the passion, no pain, no sorrow, no suffering, no infirmity of the flesh—but Christ related to us only through the taking upon himself of our nature. Instead therefore of a likeness the figure becomes a symbol—as frankly a symbol as are the first two letters of his name, XP, or the word IXΘIC, the sacred acrostic, or the figure of a lamb. It is

MICHAEL ANGELO

true that the symbol chosen by Michael Angelo is greater than these, and more worthy of the Redeemer—that is only in accordance with the genius of the painter. Michael Angelo was not content to paint a letter of the Greek alphabet judging the world.

The glory of imagination came to Art, then, through Michael Angelo—as it had come to Poetry through Dante. Heaven and earth and hell alike yielded tribute to his genius. Angels, and men, and devils, were marshalled before him in visionary procession. Let us turn for a moment from these wonderful pictures, to the man himself, as he stands, his palette in his hand, on the scaffold in the Sistine Chapel. Vasari, who knew him well, describes him to us. A man of spare form, broad shoulders, medium height. His forehead square and ample—with seven strong lines across it. His nose is finely formed—but bears the mark of a blow, accidentally inflicted by the mallet of a fellow student. His eyes are not large ; they are blue—no ! the blue is dashed with brown—and they are dominated by great eyebrows. His lips are thin—the lower lip large and projecting. His chin is well-proportioned. His hair is black—until it becomes snowed by age—and his beard, not very long, is divided. His complexion is ruddy. He is animated, amiable, resolute. His

VITTORIA COLONNA

memory is very tenacious, his perseverance indomitable. He speaks little—but when he does open his lips his tongue can be as sharp as his chisel. He is full of wit and humour. He has no wife—but like Petrarch and Dante he has his ideal.

We thank you, dear old Vasari, for your description. It brings the man before us face to face. It enables us to understand better his relations with Vittoria Colonna—the beautiful Marchèse di Pescara. How the rude strength of his nature was refined, and therefore made the more strong, by her fine influence, is not difficult to imagine. They were both followers of Savonarola; and she devoted the long years of her widowhood to all the lovely offices of charity a good woman can perform. The ladies of England who gather young girls around them to keep them from the evil, are only following in her steps. And to her the great painter confided his fears, and hopes, and aspirations. Is it a strange thing that a beautiful woman should be the consoler alike of the poor, ignorant, outcast, and of the greatest genius of the age? Ah, no. That is only what we should expect from the highest of all God's gifts to man. Vittoria Colonna was Angelo's Beatrice. It was his love for this woman, and the passionate remembrance of her which he retained to extreme old age, that brightens the closing period of his life. The life of

MICHAEL ANGELO

the gentle yet stately Marchèse remains shrouded in strange mystery. Recently discovered documents, however, throw some light upon her association with the painter. Widowed while yet in the bloom of beauty, she found refuge from her sorrow—according to Giannone, in the new spiritual life that came with the Reformation, though she never actually abandoned the Catholic Church to embrace the reformed faith. Writing to her, Angelo says—“ I am going in search of truth with uncertain step. My heart, hesitating between vice and virtue, suffers, and finds itself failing like a weary traveller wandering in the dark. Ah ! do thou become my counsellor. Thy advice shall be sacred ; clear away my doubts, teach me in my wavering how my unenlightened soul may resist the tyranny of passion even to the end. Do thou thyself who hast directed my steps towards heaven by ways of pleasantness prescribe a course for me.”

The correspondence of these two is a revelation alike of the purity of their lives, and of the exaltation of their spiritual aspirations. In one letter he compares Flemish with Italian Art. We may not perhaps agree with him that “ it is only to works which are executed in Italy that the name of true painting can be ascribed, and that is why good painting is always called Italian ”—but we do accept his faith that good painting is in itself noble

THE MAN HIMSELF

and religious—that nothing elevates a good man's spirit, and carries it farther on towards devotion, than the difficulty of reaching that state of perfection nearest to God which unites us to Him. "Now good painting," he writes, "is an imitation of His perfection, the shading of His pencil, the rendering of His music ; and it is only a refined intellect which can appreciate the difficulty of this. That is why good painting is so rare, and why so few men can get near to it, or produce it." In another letter he tells her that the plan of St. Peter's must be cruciform because "it was thus that the Saviour stretched out His arms for us." In yet another he sends a little drawing he has made for her of Christ upon the cross.

Happy is the student of Art who cares to listen to the living voice of a great painter, rather than to the rattling of the dry bones of criticism. The life of Michael Angelo is not so much the telling of a story as the movement of a drama. It is he himself who speaks, and meditates, and acts before us—now laughingly to his friends ; now sternly, or in wise counsel with princes ; now pitifully to the widow and orphan of his old servant ; now fiercely to the mad multitude ; always with reverence and tenderness to the woman he loved. "Sometimes," he says to her, "while I am conversing with the Pope I put on my old hat, not

MICHAEL ANGELO

thinking of it, and talk freely to His Holiness. However, he does not kill me for it." "I hope," says Vittoria, "that should I speak to you about painting you won't box my ears, to prove that great men are reasonable and not eccentric." To one—his brother—who had wronged his family, he writes: "By the Body of Christ! but you shall find that I will confound ten thousand such as you, if needs be." To another, his father, who had unjustly doubted him, he writes: "I hold it to be my duty to submit when you reprove me—therefore I beseech you to put away your anger and come back." Irritable, impetuous, quick in resolution, he took counsel with no one but himself. It was the manly character that he displayed, rather than his frescoes and his statues, which won for him the enthusiastic admiration of the citizens. The Florentines saw in him the defender of the independence of the Republic of Florence. During the siege he remained almost continually in the fortress, directing everything in person. When he did come down into the city it was only to work stealthily at his sculpture or his painting.

Sculptor, Painter, and now Architect, for we turn to St. Peter's and find Michael Angelo there. In 1547 he was appointed architect of the Duomo, in succession to San Gallo. In 1558 he finished his

AS AN ARCHITECT

model for the dome. My subject, however, is the Seven Angels of the Renaissance, not the construction of a cathedral. I will be content to let San Pietro tell its own story—just as Angelo himself made marble to speak. This is what it said to me, as I stood painting in its aisles—

Angelo built me in this city of Rome ;
Laid the cross low upon the earth, and hung
A dome above it—like that mightier dome
Where sang the angels when the world was young,
And the Creator loved it. Now it is old,
And the Redeemer loves it, and has thus,
Creator and Redeemer of the fold,
Stretched out His arms upon the cross for us.

So Angelo built me, with the golden rod
Of the "Seventh Angel," who, in Paradise,
Measured the walls of the new city of God.
Angel or Angelo—for in that blest place
Angels and men see God with equal eyes,
And all his servants serve Him face to face.

Angel or Angelo ? It is a curious question to be suggested by the sacred text. It is, however, suggested only—not answered. Perhaps the writer could not answer it. Perhaps it cannot be answered until we know what is the difference between a man, and an angel. The measurements given by St. John are like the measurements of an architect—by scale. They are, he says, "according to the measure of a man, that is of an angel."

MICHAEL ANGELO

Is then the spirituality of its use a measure of the fineness of fine art? It cannot be so—for pagan temples, foul with unholy rites, are not less lovely, considered as architecture, than the church which is the consecrated expression of Michael Angelo's passionate love of Christ. Or is the beauty of the service Art renders to Religion a measure of the spirituality of the worshipper, and of his acceptance by the Divine Being? Again, No. It is inconceivable that God should delight particularly in Gothic or Renaissance, or be more gracious amidst Corinthian columns than amidst columns of the Doric or Ionic orders. There must be a difference between the measure of a man and of an angel—between Art, that is, and Religion—if only, we can discover it. I think that Michael Angelo had discovered it.

Sculptor, Painter, Architect. Have I not left one word out? Ah, yes—more than one. The life of Michael Angelo as a painter, and sculptor, and architect, might be paralleled by the life of Michael Angelo as an engineer, as a philosopher, as a scholar, as a poet. The “seven lines across his forehead” are they not a cypher of the sevenfold gifts of his genius? I am considering his life only as one of the great torch-bearers that flash their light on Art. But there is an episode of singular beauty to be recalled, in which he stands

AS A POET

before us for a moment crowned with laurel, against the dark background of the troublous times in which he lived. Among the sculptures of the Chapel of the Medici, in Florence, is the figure of Night. It made so powerful an impression at the time that many poets vied with each other in celebrating it in verse. There is still extant, indeed, a lovely stanza, written by one whose name has been forgotten. "She whom thou seest sleeping so sweetly was sculptured by an Angel. But if she sleeps she must have life. If thou dost not believe it wake her, and she will speak."

To this Michael Angelo replied in verses equally polished, and with an exaltation of thought which lifts him as a poet to his own level as a sculptor: "Sweet to me is sleep—and still sweeter to sleep in marble. In these days of evil and dishonour, not to see, not to remember, is itself happiness. Therefore wake me not, but speak low."

It chanceth sometimes that after studying a great work of Art, such as the *Dies Iræ*, in the Sistine Chapel—its design, the grouping of the figures, the action, the expression, the colour, the technique—we turn away thinking we have seen all that is to be seen: and yet, looking back for an instant, some fresh revelation of its beauty or of its defect, which we had not observed before,

MICHAEL ANGELO

strikes us with sudden force. May we not, then, in considering the life of a great painter, do as we would do with his picture—that is, look back, just for a moment. If a fresh light should fall upon us, it will be worth attention ; if we see nothing new we shall be the more confirmed in the judgment we have already formed. What will an impressionist sketch show us of Michael Angelo Buonarroti ?

A bambino—born at the very hour when Venus and Mercury were in conjunction with Jupiter—sucking in the use of mallet and chisel with his mother's milk.

A child, not very clever at school, but carefully taught, and passing at an early age to the studio of a famous artist.

A youth, adopted by Lorenzo the Magnificent, brought up with princes, in daily association with the finest intellects of the Renaissance.

A young man, passionately interested in the higher politics of the day, and always taking the generous side.

A lover, who loved one only—a woman as noble as himself.

A sturdy republican,—ardent, courageous, incorruptible.

A Christian, profoundly moved by the controversies which divided the Church of Christ.

DERELICT

A painter, an architect, a sculptor, a poet—in every act of his life immortal.

An old man of eighty, beginning to build the dome of St. Peter's.

A derelict of the Renaissance—having led its armies to victory—dying sorrowfully and alone, with no commander to succeed him, and no army worth commanding.

The end came in 1564. Michael Angelo had survived Vittoria Colonna sixteen years. Sixteen years of regret that when she lay dead he had ventured only to kiss her hand, when he might have kissed her lips. Years of unremitting labour—he was upwards of eighty years old when he made the calculations for the dome of St. Peter's, and the beautiful model which is preserved in the Clementine chapel. Years of exile, for the battered old republican refused to return to Florence. Years of declining health, the springs of life decreasing day by day, the heaven-sent frenzy which makes everything seem easy to youth flickering and going out. Years of silence and reserve—"I go my way alone. For myself I have at least this satisfaction, that no one can read in my face the story of my weariness and longing." Years in which to do justice to his rivals—"Bramante," he wrote, "was as great an architect as any who have appeared from antient times to our own. It was

MICHAEL ANGELO

he who laid the foundations of St. Peter's. Raphael painted a master-piece in Rome which would have a just title to the first rank." Years, nevertheless, in which, when the great work of his life was in question, the building of S. Peter's—his character resumed all its old ruggedness and determination. "Your business," said he to the Great Council, "your business is to give me the money, and to get rid of knaves. As to the building—that is my affair." Then, turning to Julius III., "You see, Holy Father, what I get. If the fatigue which I endure is of no use to my soul, I am losing time and trouble." The Pope, who loved him, put his hands upon his shoulders and said, "You are doing much both for soul and body."

Body and soul were, however, separated on the 18th of February, in his eighty-ninth year. "The man with the broad square forehead, with seven lines straight across it," would be seen no more in the streets of Rome, or leaning on the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. The soul of Michael Angelo remains with us in his works ; but his body had still to be fought for, like the body of Moses. Rome and Florence disputed for its possession. Immediately after his death the great painter was carried, by command of the Pope, to the church of the Apostoli, to remain there until a mausoleum worthy of him should be raised in St. Peter's.

SANTA CROCE

The beautiful lines he had written in response to the tributary verses of the Florentine poet—which I have already translated—might now have been engraved over him in the great cathedral he had designed—

Grato mi è il sonno, e piu l'esser di sasso :
Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura,
Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura ;
Però non mi destar ; deh parla basso !

But the Florentines contrived to steal the sleeper from the church, and carried him by stealth to Florence. There he was received at midnight, the oldest and most distinguished of the Academicians—painters and sculptors, and architects—bearing torches, the younger men carrying the bier. The greatest secrecy had been observed, but the news passed quickly from mouth to mouth, and the citizens crowded in thousands to Santa Croce. There Michael Angelo still sleeps.

TITIAN



TITIAN. *In that light—in that light! The Lady Flora cannot return to England until Titian has painted her.*

THE LADY FLORA. *Why in that light? And why not in England? The light is the same.*

TITIAN. *Sometimes. But it is the colour! It is ivory—it is gold—it is the light which flashed on Danæ of Argos in her brazen tower!*

THE LADY FLORA. *That was in the old days of the gods.*

TITIAN. *Yes—but this morning, looking across the Adriatic, I saw Pegasus—*

THE LADY FLORA. *Pegasus? It was only a cluster of stars!*

TITIAN. *It was a Messenger from Olympus.*





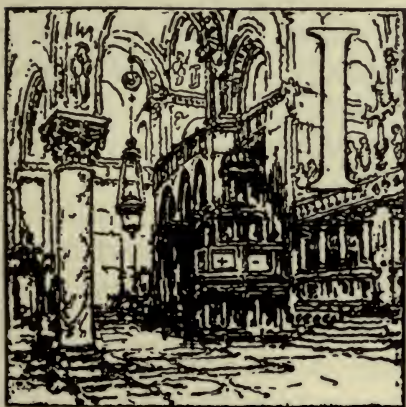
Hanfstaengl

Tschirnhaus

PLATE XIX. FROM THE PAINTING
IN THE ROYAL GALLERY, BERLIN

TO VIMU
ANBODU

TITIAN



CANNOT tell how many are the sons of Italy—but as an artist I know that she is the mother of many beautiful daughters. Are not there first the twin sisters—Siena and Florence?—to say nothing of Naples

and Bologna, and Milan, and Rome, each in itself an alma mater of a school of Art? And last—the youngest of them all, and loveliest—Venice, with garments woven of sea and sky, cinctured with hills blue as the lapis-lazuli of her shrines—where the sun rises and sets, crowning her twice daily

TITIAN

with rubies and gold, and the stars every night string a necklace of pearls as the gondolas rock idly on the silent highway that winds amidst her sleeping palaces.

But it is not for the sake of the jewels—the sun, and moon, and stars—which are her adornment, that I turn to the Queen of the Adriatic now ; nor is it even for the sake of the memory of happy days when I watched every changing light that fell on her golden architecture, as a lover watches the varying expression of his mistress' face. It is for the sake of Titian. It is because Venice is the Venice of Titian—the third of the Five Great Painters of the Renaissance. His name stands third, not as being of third rank—for the five were equal—but as the third to be inscribed on the roll-call by the hand of Time.

Venice, however, is to each of her visitors a different city. There are Shylocks, to whom she is only the Rialto ; there are Bassanios, to whom she is a place of perpetual festival ; there are Antonios, to whom she is an altar of sacrifice ; there are Jessicas, who run from her for love ; and Portias, who visit her by stealth. There are poets—see now, how even men of the same craft will differ from each other in their account of her ! Dante, casting about for a simile for the blackness of his Malebolge, can think of nothing grim enough but—“ the great arsenal of the Venetians, where

THE VENICE OF DANTE

seethes in its furnaces the burning pitch." Nor, except in two very uncomplimentary passages in the "Paradiso," does he care to make Venice anything better than a background for

A black devil of ferocious aspect
Running along a crag.

—and yet Dante knew Venice in the very zenith of her greatness ; when her Doges had just given shelter to a Pope flying from the fury of a Barbarossa, had held Otho prisoner, had dictated terms at the gates of Constantinople, had annexed the islands of Greece, and claimed entire dominion of the sea.

But hear now what another poet says of her :

A sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine heights
Of blue Friuli's mountains.

And again—

A dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Looked to the wingèd lion's marble piles
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles.

—and yet Lord Byron knew her only in her desolation, despoiled and trampled underfoot by Napoleon, ceded as merchandise to the Austrians, her children sealing their own shame by the abdication of her senators with the declaration, amidst tears and blood, that " Venice was no more."

TITIAN

So, standing apart from each other by the space of six centuries, these two men looked upon our beautiful city. But neither of them beheld Venice. The one saw only her cradle, rocked by the tempests of passion and war ; the other—her empty place, after that she had arisen, and had reigned a Queen, and had passed away.

The Venice of which I write, however, is the Venice, not of the poet, or the statesman, or the soldier, but of the painter. It is the busy world—full of peril—full also of life and light and action, and therefore bright with hope—to which Titian came, a simple lad, from the Alpine village of Cadore. It is the school where he found a master in Bellini, and companions in Giorgione and Palma Vecchio. It is the home where he entertained his friends in a pleasant garden, or showed them the beautiful pictures that filled his house, or feasted them with rare viands and costly wines. It is the arena where he struggled hard for mastery with craftsmen only less great than himself. It is the exchange where he made the world rich—Paris and Madrid, London and Rome, competing for the treasures of his studio. It is the court where he, a prince among painters, received the visits of Angelo and Dürer, princes also by the same right of pre-eminence in their own lands. It is the city of palaces that he made more splendid ; of

THE VENICE OF TITIAN

shrines that he made more sacred ; and having chosen for himself a grave there, in the stately Church of the Frari, and fallen stricken by the plague, it is now his mausoleum, where, after nearly a hundred years of toil, and ambition, and defeat, and glory, he at last sleeps.

Time has dealt gently with Venice. I think that few cities have suffered so little in the way of alteration, or lost landmarks. Its seat upon the waters does not lend itself to suburban extension ; its main thoroughfares are as enduring as the salt sea of which they are made. And yet Venice to-day is not quite the same as it was four hundred years ago—when Tiziano, the little lad from Cadore, entered the studio of the Bellini, and with Giorgione talked over the new discoveries in the other world by Columbus. In one respect, indeed, it is more like than we could wish it to be—for it has lost its campanile. Titian saw the slow building of its walls, and may have taken part in its design—but he did not live to see its beautiful battlements towering over San Marco and the Hall of the Great Council. Nor in Titian's time was there the dome of Santa Maria della Salute at the other side of the Grand Canal, nor the Dogana, nor the Rialto. The chief splendours of architecture with which his eyes were familiar were the Duomo, with its antient mosaics ; the Doges'

TITIAN

Palace, with its Bridge of Sighs ; the monastery of the Frari, one of the largest and most beautiful of the churches of Italy ; and the old Fondaco, where the merchants of Venice used to meet on change, long before Antonio—the Merchant of Venice—lost his ship of rich lading on the Goodwin Sands. All these buildings were enriched with the work of Titian and his companions.

The only thing that never changes seems to be the law that everything must change. If since Titian lived Venice has altered a little, Art has been revolutionised. And the revolution began in Titian's studio. It came about in this way. The practice of painting in oil—invented by the Van Eycks early in the fifteenth century, had reached the Italian schools. In the hands of the Flemish painters it had already proved to be successful as a means of imparting the most exquisite finish of detail and surface, together with a depth and richness of colour far beyond anything that could be attained by the old methods of fresco and tempera. In the hands of Titian it became a new language for the artist, just as with Dante the old dialect of Italy had become a new language for the poet. The limitations with which the German painters had practised the art were disregarded by Titian. The white grounds and separate palettes of colour disappeared with the sweep of his brush.

MASTER PAINTERS

Moreover, the new method affected vitally the conditions of the painter's life.

Hitherto painters had worked in groups, or companies—many men being engaged upon the same design, under a chief, who was known as the "Master." The great mural decorations which covered the interiors of churches and municipal buildings could scarcely otherwise have been carried to completion. The design would of course be the master's; and perhaps the principal figures would be by his own hand; but the subordinate parts of the picture would be painted by his pupils and assistants. The two angels by Leonardo Da Vinci were thus painted in Verrocchio's picture of the Baptism of our Lord. The master was in effect the architect of the design—for the word architect simply means chief artist. And just as the architect of a cathedral, though he may make drawings for every lovely capital or traceried window, does not build the cathedral with his own hands, so the master designed, but did not necessarily paint, the pictures attributed to him. There are a few instances in which the designer is also the painter, suffering no other hand to touch his work. Michael Angelo, as we have seen, was alone in painting the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. But that was a rare exception, and the work cost twelve years of his life. Moreover the exigencies of time and material made it necessary for men to

TITIAN

work together. In mosaic there was the endless counting, and fitting, and embedding, of the tesserae ; in fresco, the swift execution of the design on the wet plaster. So that in Titian's time the word " master " did not mean quite the same thing as it does now. The Bellini were Titian's masters—and so was Giorgione—for Titian worked under them, following their designs ; and yet, as a painter, Titian was the Master of them all.

This companionship in labour, however, affected the whole status of the artist's life. Men were brought together, not so much to see each other's work when it was done—as to see the doing of it. If the design was wrought in mosaic it might well be that the most unimaginative, but exact workman, would be the best workman, and there would be little opportunity for a touch of genius in him to bring him closer to his master. But when the material was fresco, or tempera, the assistant had his chance. The success of the whole design might be made or marred by the technique—which the assistant shared with his chief. From technique the young genius would pass to design, as we have seen in the lives of Da Vinci and Michael Angelo.

Now the practice of oil painting, brought to the perfection it attained under Titian, tended to strengthen the hand of the individual as against the community. It created the art of painting

THE VENUE CHANGED

pictures. The old limitations of tempera, and fresco, and mosaic, became of little account. If a man would show his skill and prowess as a painter it was no longer necessary for him to dream—as Andrea del Sarto dreamed—of

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover——

—nor even to wait for a commission, by the canons of some neighbouring monastery, to decorate their refectory. The artist could just buy a canvas, and paint his picture in his own home. It seems at first sight like exchanging the game of Whist played with four merry partners, for the solitary game of Patience played with oneself. But it meant much more than that.

It meant to Art that the venue was changed. It meant that the artist, no longer tied to the service of the Church or the State, should turn for inspiration to the things which concern the common passions of our lives. It meant that Dutch painters should paint Dutchmen drinking beer, and Dutch women cleaning cabbages. It meant that Titian should paint a lovely English girl as “Flora”—and the beautiful Laura Dianti as “Venus blindfolding Master Cupid,” while her sisters—as Nymphs—arm him with the arrows of

TITIAN

the bow. It meant that Art had passed from the control of ecclesiastics to the self-control of the artist in his own studio.

What do we look for in Art ? Do we all look for the same thing ? Why, even in the commonest things of life, our everyday language betrays that we are hopelessly divided. Look at Titian's "Flora" in the gallery of the Uffizi at Florence. Is not her neck ivory ? Is not her hair gold ? Do not her garments flash with light ? It is simply the portrait of a girl—that beautiful creation which makes the whole world only a suburb of Paradise. Titian paints her with flowers in her hand. Of course. God made the flowers specially for women. But what do we call her ? If we are Germans we call her "Fraulein," little woman—and think how well she will manage her household some day when she becomes a "Frau." If we are French we call her "M'selle," and think how stately a queen she will be when she is entitled to be named "Madame." If we are Italian we call her "Signorina" as though we worshipped at a little shrine. If we are English we are content to call her "Miss," a word which, meaning nothing, has become in Paris a favourite name for a pet dog. But girls are beautiful because they are beautiful—not because we force upon them names that have false meanings. It is Sir Joshua Reynolds who

THE
GALLERY OF THE UFFIZI



Brogi

PLATE XX. FLORA

FROM THE PAINTING BY TITIAN
IN THE GALLERY OF THE UFFIZI

THE NEW ALCHEMY

says : " There are many writers who, not being of the profession, and consequently not knowing what can or cannot be done in Art, always find in their favourite artists what they have resolved to find. They praise excellences which cannot exist together. In a word the critics describe only their own imaginations." Let us see to it that in Titian's works we see Titian ; in Angelo's, Angelo ; in Da Vinci's, Da Vinci. The minds of these great painters move in different planes of thought. Michael Angelo sees the event—Da Vinci sees the form—Titian sees the colour. Is not her neck ivory ? Is not her hair gold ? Yes, and yet No. The colours Titian used are the same as those of Da Vinci. The ivory is as brown as the keys of an old piano. A bronze penny is smarter than her hair. A farthing candle at the shrine of " Our Lady " is brighter than the flashing of her garments. Other men have painted with more brilliant pigments and their pictures have seemed dull. What is it that turns raw umber into ivory—yellow ochre into gold—and white lead into the lightnings of Jupiter ? Is it alchemy ? Yes, it is the alchemy of Art. It is Art that makes the magic change. It is the Art that came with the Renaissance. It is the Art of Titian.

But it is of no use if you are in Florence to look for the dome of St. Peter's, nor if you are in Venice

TITIAN

to look for Giotto's Tower. It is Sir Joshua Reynolds, again, who observes how this difference of vision affects the painter, and is discernible even more in his studies than in his finished work. Da Vinci insists upon being right to a line's breadth. He will draw the thing over and over again till the outline is purified as silver five times in the fire. It matters nothing to him whether it be in red chalk or black. Titian insists on the colour being right—let the edges take care of themselves. He is looking for gold—or for ivory—or for lightning ! But neither can obtain what he desires without sacrifice. We shall see presently, in studying the works of Raphael, what can be obtained by compromise. But Titian never compromised. He flew at the thing and did it—right or wrong. There are two things the painter is always striving to do—and never can accomplish. The one thing is to paint light, the other to paint darkness. Both are alike impossible. If the painting were really luminous it would blind our eyes to look upon it. If it were really dark we could not see it. The Kingdom of Art lies in the twilight of Nature, as it lies in the twilight of our lives. Titian has in this respect made the nearest approach to seeing the invisible.

It is only by the realization of this individuality of the masters that lovers of Art can pass from London to Florence, and Venice, and Rome, seeing

THE GLORY OF COLOUR

in each change some new splendour—a splendour related to what they have seen before, but not competing with it, nor dimming its lustre by a greater light. No one genius exhausts the resources of Art, any more than the people of one nation are the sole exemplary of all the virtues. There are women of Italy, like Vittoria Colonna, who might be great queens in society. There are women of France, like Joan of Arc, who might be worshipped at a shrine. Englishmen sometimes forget the “Miss” and say “Santa Filomena.” We shall see presently that Correggio was a colourist as well as Titian, and that Raphael was a master of form as well as Da Vinci. But if we would see these men at their highest, we must learn to look at their work with clean eyes, and adapt the focus of our vision to theirs.

With Titian came the glory of colour. “The old masters,” says a quaint writer, “had already divested themselves of the stiffness of the Greek artists, but had not attained to the perfection of Art—the representation of the tenderness of flesh.” By the “old masters” in the time of Titian is meant Cimabue, and Giotto, Margaritone and Orcagna—perhaps even Fra Angelico. But these men had, for the most part, designed saints and angels. Whether Fra Angelico’s ethereal saints and rosy-winged angels, or Titian’s vividly

TITIAN

painted flesh and blood, comes nearest to the Celestial Choir, I, never having been myself in Heaven, am not in a position to determine. But I have a profound conviction that in Art men sometimes speak to each other in unknown tongues ; and if I fail to understand the work of a great painter I do not hastily regard it as foolishness—I prefer to suspend judgment until I have learned his language. In the painting of living men and women the Renaissance was an immeasurable advance upon the Art of the Awakening—and Titian, in his mastery of the brush, the richness of his palette, the vividness of his realism, was the leader. Look now at his picture of our Lord, and compare it with that of Da Vinci, or Michael Angelo, or Raphael. If Angelico's visions of Christ are more like what we imagine Christ to be now, the face that Titian painted is certainly more like what the Redeemer was when He lived on earth—a man amongst men.

Let me now change my method of telling the story. A few pages are not enough in which to tell the story of Titian's life, and of the Renaissance, and of the Seven Angels. And yet the Seven Angels, and the Renaissance, and Titian,—are not to be separated, if we would understand the story of Italian Art. That, however, which could not be effected by diffusion, may perhaps be effected by

CADORE TO VENICE

concentration. Titian was born in 1477, and died in 1576. I will take the century of his life, decade by decade, illustrating each by a characteristic sketch, as one would illustrate a poem by a series of outlines. If they should seem slight let it be remembered that the value of a sketch does not depend on its elaboration—it is sufficient for its purpose if it be true.

THE CHILD ARTIST

Our first sketch shall be of the child's home, a village in the mountainous district of Cadore—about seventy miles north of Venice. There, at Pieve, the earliest years of his childhood were passed face to face with Nature in perhaps the grandest of the many aspects she can assume. The castellated rocks of porphyry, the weird dragon's-teeth of the dolomites, the snow mingled with fire as the sun rose or set beyond the hills, the rushing waters of the Piave, the dark forests from which the trees came crashing down to be floated away in rafts for the ship-builders of the lagoons, the low murmur of the wind creeping up the valleys, or the thunder of it when tempests brake upon the mountains—these were among the sights and sounds familiar to his boyhood, and they form the background of our picture. If our

TITIAN

picture seems altogether background, we must remember that in such scenery the small figure of a child is but of little account. Not much is known of the childhood of Titian. There is a legend of a Madonna painted by him, with colours expressed from flowers, on the walls of his father's cottage ; but of this it is sufficient to say that it is a legend. We know only that at the age of nine the story of his child-life may be said to close, for he was then sent to Venice to be apprenticed as a painter ; but we may well believe that the impressions he received during these the first nine years of his life were of a nature that the ninety years which followed served rather to deepen than to efface.

TITIAN AS A STUDENT

Our second sketch is of a youth at Venice. Titian was of a good family, and it was not without due consideration that he was permitted to pursue the study of art, instead of arms or law. This indicates that the Painter held no mean position in the Republic. At the time of his apprenticeship, there were many masters in Venice of great distinction. The Bellini—Antonello da Messina—Cima—Sebastian Zuccato, engaged in the restoration, which was even then going on, of the mosaics of

THE BELLINI

St. Mark's—Carpaccio—Giorgione—Vivarini—these were among the chief painters, not of the place only, but of the age. And just as in our own day I have heard the students at Heatherly's, in Newman Street, or at the schools of the Academy, talk over the "Daphnephoria" of Leighton, or the "North-West Passage" of Millais, so in the workshops of the Bellini I seem to hear the youthful Titian and Giorgione and Palma Vecchio, with their companions, descanting on the merits of Gentile's "Procession of the Relic," or Carpaccio's "Saint Ursula." But besides the merits of the masters, these students near the Fondaco have subject for discussion in the question of the styles. Tempera is still taught in the schools, but the great painters are beginning to discard it. Some of the old frescoes are still standing on the walls of the Great Council Chamber. The "pale" Paradise of Guariento has not yet been covered by the more splendid Paradise of Tintoretto ; but Vivarini has exhibited the first oil-painting in Venice, and the old style, so long clung to by the Venetians, is fast giving place to the new. In the midst of such a movement, among companions so worthy of him—and of whom one at least, if only he might live, will prove a formidable rival—taught by such masters as Zuccato and the Bellini—fascinated with the beauty of the loveliest city in the world—filled with tender memories of the home which lies

TITIAN

hidden in the blue line of the distant Alps, it is thus that Titian begins his artist-life. And if in this second sketch, as in the first, we see but little of Titian himself, yet for the sake

Of the fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountains round it and the sky above,

the sketch must stand. There will not be wanting presently the interest that attaches to the living man.

THE YOUNG MASTER

If in the later schools of Venetian art we see the scattering of the gifts of Titian amongst his successors, we see in the art of Titian himself the gathering into one of the many excellencies of his contemporaries and of those who preceded him. And it is in the works of his early manhood that this gathering of his forces is most apparent. The daring and dangerous facility that seemed natural to him was held in check, but not destroyed, by the careful and minute draughtsmanship insisted upon by Giovanni Bellini. The result was strength, with refinement, based upon knowledge. How much the similarity between his work and that of Giorgione or of Palma Vecchio is due to mastery, or to assimilation, would be impossible to determine. A corresponding agreement will



PLATE, XXI. CUPID EQUIPPED
FROM A PAINTING BY TITIAN, IN THE BORGHESE

Hanfstaeigl

70 2141
California

GIORGIONE

often be found between young painters who work much together. Millais and Rossetti and Holman Hunt, whose names were once associated in this manner, were wide apart eventually, nevertheless they have not been without influence upon each other. We know now that Titian and Giorgione entered early into partnership, and that though Giorgione, the senior of Titian by two years, took the lead, yet Titian before he was thirty years old was recognised as a master even amongst the great painters of Venice. He had visited the court of Ferrara, and painted the picture of the "Tribute-money," now in the gallery at Dresden, and the "Bacchus and Ariadne" of our own national collection. We must think of him also in connection with the stirring events of the time. Now, there were leagues with Rome and Milan against France; now, leagues with France against Milan and Naples. So called Christian popes and emperors and kings were intriguing with the Sultan to let loose a hell of slaughter upon Christendom. Crusades were preached on the piazza of San Marco, and fifty thousand voices yelled for the slaughter of the Turks. Can we conceive of these things, and the young painter in the midst of them, without seeing the colour they would give to his life? So our third sketch should close, but that against the lurid glare of it appears one beautiful figure. It is said that he loved Violante, the daughter of his

TITIAN

friend Palma Vecchio. The story is not verified, and it is difficult to reconcile it with certain dates which appear to be sufficiently attested ; nevertheless, we trace the delicate outline of a woman, like the dream that comes to most men at some time of their lives, the dream that is not always realised. Violante, however, did not become the wife of Titian, and we know her only by the soft lustre of her eyes and the white garments folded across her bosom.

URSA MAJOR

At the age of thirty Titian was assisting Giorgione in the decoration of the Fondaco, a Government building that had been re-constructed after a great fire. They painted in fresco ; but Venice, with its burning summers and keen winters, its humid and salt atmosphere, can be as cruel as our London of yellow fog and black smoke. There is little left at the Fondaco to tell us whether, while working together as friends, they were pursuing the same path as painters, or were gradually differentiating their styles. It is said that Giorgione drew his inspiration from the antique, while Titian relied less on classic beauty and more on the faithful representation of Nature. We know what Titian accomplished, but to what splendours

A VISIT FROM ALBERT DÜRER

his companion might have attained we shall never know. The face of Giorgione fades out of our picture at this time. He died in 1511, at the early age of thirty-three. But if the Venice of Titian in the first years of the century is touched with the melancholy of the death of one great painter, it rings with the lighthearted laughter of another. At the very time that Giorgione and Titian were preparing for the last work they should execute together, Albert Dürer, then on a visit to Venice, was corresponding with his friend, "good master Pirkheimer," of Nuremberg. "My French mantle and my Italian coat greet you, both of them," he writes; "I wish you were in Venice. There are many fine fellows here among the painters, who get more and more friendly with me; it holds one's heart up. Well brought-up folks, good lute-players, skilled pipers, and many noble and excellent people are in the company. On the other hand, there are the falsest, most lying, thievish villains in the whole world, I believe, appearing to the unwary the pleasantest possible fellows. I laugh to myself when they try it with me. They say my art is not on the antique, and therefore not good. But Giovanni Bellini, who has praised me much before many gentlemen, wishes to have something from my hand. He has come himself and asked me, and he will pay me handsomely for it. I understand he is a pious man. He is very

TITIAN

old indeed, and yet the best amongst them. But what pleased me eleven years ago does not give me the same pleasure now ; there are better painters here." Thus writes Albert Dürer, of the Venice of Titian, living amongst the people, visiting the studios, quarrelling with the painters ; and we can find no picture more faithful than that which he has thus sketched for us, and playfully signed—" Given at Venice, at 9 of the evening, Saturday after Candlemas in the year 1506." How he did quarrel, how carefully he counted his ducats, how bright a place Venice seemed to him, how keenly he felt the splendour of Venetian colour, how susceptible he was as an artist, how intractable as a man—all this comes out so naïvely in his correspondence with his friend, and at the same time gives so vivid an impression of Venice as he knew it, that I will lay down my pen for the moment that he may finish the sketch in his own words :—" The painters are becoming very obnoxious to me. They have had me before the courts three times, and compelled me to pay four good florins to their guild. All the world wishes me well except the painters ! You would give a ducat to see my picture, it is so good and rich in colour. I have silenced all the painters who say ' he composes well, but knows little about colour.' Indeed, every one praises my colour. But I must tell you, I have actually been to learn dancing

A LETTER FROM THE DUKE

here, and have been twice to the school. I must pay the master a ducat. Nobody could get me into it, however, so I have lost all my trouble, and can do nothing, alas ! How shall I live in Nuremberg after the bright sun of Venice ? ”

TITIAN IN HIS STUDIO

Our fifth sketch shows us a painter's studio in Venice, into which the sunshine of a spring morning is streaming. A man of grave mien is standing there ; he is reading a letter, and as he reads, his brow knits, and he is angry. It is Titian, and the letter in his hand is from Alphonso, the great Duke of Ferrara, upbraiding him wrathfully, and threatening the direst displeasure if he does not make haste to finish a picture he has promised. Presently the painter turns to some canvases and unfinished sketches, and bringing them to the light, examines them carefully. There is the portrait of Lucretia Borgia, and of Laura Dianti, and of the Duke himself, with “ black, curly locks, pointed moustache, and well-trimmed beard of chestnut, with broad forehead, arched brow, and clear eye, altogether noble in attitude and proportion.” As Titian looks at the face, his anger cools, and he resolves to propitiate his friend. But there are other portraits there, of Senators, Doges, fair

TITIAN

youths, beautiful women, and chief amongst them that of Ariosto the poet, dignified, serene, yet full of the brilliancy of intellectual life—"a figure of noble port, with neck and throat exposed, fine features, handsomely set off by a spare beard and long chestnut hair divided in the middle." He will meet him perhaps to-night at the painters' guild. Titian turns again to the painting on his easel. It is the Duke's picture. After all, it is well in hand; Alphonso the impatient, shall have it in good time. But two or three points remain for consideration.

The picture—which is now one of the glories of our National Gallery—is known as the meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne. But the word "Bacchus" is a misnomer—it is only a nickname—with sinister associations which have nothing to do with the meeting of the lovers. Everybody knows that they met at Naxos, in the Ægean, and that after their marriage the island was dedicated to him as *Dionysias*. Dionysus therefore is his true name—especially in relation to Ariadne—for the daughter of Minos was at least as Hellenic as her old rival, Helen of Troy. Titian, however, has not been very particular as to the unities. The figure of Dionysus is Greek, but the scene is an Italian landscape. In the distance are the mountains of Cadore, beloved of the painter. The chariot is a *carrucca*, with its ivory *curulis*. The



PLATE XXII. DIONYSUS

FROM A PAINTING BY TITIAN
IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE

THE STORY OF DIONYSUS

leopards come, dead or alive, from the Indies—brought by Venetian traders. The nymphs are models of the studio. But the colour! The colour is Titian's—the design is Titian's—the painting is Titian's.

How shall Titian paint the merry god? What shall he call the picture. Dionysus is no doubt an improvement on Bacchus—but is there no other name? Things have changed since Titian came as a lad to Venice. The Art of printing has made rapid strides. Aldus has succeeded in casting Greek type, and a splendid edition of Homer, in folio, lies upon his table. Titian is living as a prince. All the wisdom of the wise men, all the scholarship of the schools, finds its way into his studio. He turns from Catullus, his favourite poet to Ovid, and finds that Ovid confirms Catullus. It is a curious thing, however, that the story of Ariadne is not told in the *Metamorphoses*—but there is no doubt as to Dionysus. Dionysus is a raillant youth. At Elis, he was represented as an old man with a beard—but Elis is comparatively modern, in Homer's time it did not exist. Besides, Dionysus shared with Apollo the gift of eternal youth. How then could he be old and ugly? Titian decides against the beard.

Dionysus is leaping from his chariot. He has caught sight of Ariadne. Leopards and lions are not swift enough for a god in love. Dionysus, did

TITIAN

I say ? Ariadne was used to strange sights—she had seen the Minotaur ! But of all the Metamorphoses ever imagined of gods or men, none could have astonished her so much as to have been told that the beautiful apparition coming through the air was really the great Lawgiver of the Hebrews. Yet that is what Titian is told in his books. He did not believe it. He had painted Bacchus yesterday, he was going to paint Moses to-morrow, and they would be very different figures—to say they were the same is to play fast and loose alike with fable and history. It makes one laugh or cry. How curiously things get mixed in an artist's studio, when Paganism and Christianity are fighting there for the mastery. A yard or two of canvas, a little paint on a palette, the sweep of a brush, and lo ! darkness and light, truth and falsehood, heaven and earth and hell are brought together. For Dionysus was born in Egypt—and so was Moses. Dionysus was saved in an ark—so was Moses. Dionysus was *Bimater*, for he had two mothers—one by adoption—so had Moses. Dionysus was *Bicornis*—so also was Moses when the glory of the Lord fell upon his brow. Dionysus gave the law on two tables of stone—so did Moses. Dionysus kept a dog—so did Moses for that is the meaning of the word Caleb. Moreover, it is told of Dionysus that when he struck the rock, water rushed forth ; where he travelled

SANTA MARIA GLORIOSA

the land flowed with milk and honey ; the rivers dried up under his feet that he might pass over ; his staff, cast upon the ground, crept about like a dragon ; and when black darkness fell upon the people, he and his followers were surrounded with light.

While Titian is thinking it carefully over—suddenly is heard the sound of church bells clashing through the bright air, and Messer Titian—for he is not yet Count Palatine—hastily replacing the canvases and laying aside the Duke's letter, prepares to leave the studio. At the *rio* he selects a gondola, which, threading its course amongst the pleasure boats on the Grand Canal, turns into one of the narrow water-ways on the right, and soon reaches the steps of a great church. It is the Church of the Frari, and a great company are assembled to witness the unveiling of a new altar-piece. There, in the rich gloom of the massive chancel-arches, is the figure of the Virgin, borne on a cloud of angels, her face uplifted to the Eternal, who bends over her from the Empyrean ; beneath are the Apostles, lost in wonder at the glory of her Assumption. It is a master-piece of art, and the people are stirred to enthusiasm. The music thunders through the aisles of the Frari, and creeps along the vaulted roof, where the incense has already climbed to meet it. And as Titian stands amongst the crowd, looking at his own

TITIAN

painting, and listening to the murmurs of delight, he knows that after the patient toil of nearly half a century he has reached the first great triumph of his life.

TITIAN AS PRESIDENT

Let us picture to ourselves a meeting of the Guild of Painters in the Venice of Titian. It is about the year 1532, and their new Hall has just been built through the munificent bequest of Catena, a painter who has just died. In this Hall are assembled not painters only, but designers, gilders, embroiderers, and men of every craft in which the leading idea is Art. Among the first to enter we may imagine the young Moroni, and perhaps Bassano ; they are of the same age, about twenty-two years, and they have caught so much of the spirit of Titian that the time may come when some of their work shall be mistaken for that of the great master. As they enter, they are speaking of the recent death of Palma Vecchio, in whose workshops they were perhaps students. They are presently joined by Paris Bordone, their senior by a few years, but still young—one who had studied under Giorgione, and can tell them much about the splendid young genius who, had he lived, would have made the greatest tremble

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY



Hausstaengl

Lud. Ariosto.

PLATE XXIII. THE POET OF THE RENASCENCE

FROM THE PAINTING BY TITIAN

IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

A VISIT FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

for their laurels ; as to himself, he is expecting shortly to be invited to the French Court. And if he asks them whether Pordenone is coming to-night, they may perhaps tell him No, for he is at Piacenza, painting frescoes for the Church of Santa Maria ; and one of them may suggest the question whether he, Pordenone, may not get himself into trouble with the pious monks there, if he persists in mixing up his virgins and nymphs, satyrs and saints, all on the same canvas. And now other painters crowd into the assembly—Bonifazio, who is late, for he has been working long hours at his painting of “ The Cleansing of the Temple ” in the Ducal Palace—and, it may be, Carpaccio and Tintoretto ; but if so, the one will be a venerable senior, and the other a stripling not yet out of his teens, but such a stripling in art as was David in war. There are many more of the guild, but we take note only of the painters. Of all the company, however, painters or craftsmen of whatever sort, there are two men standing in their midst to whom we turn with the deepest interest. They are nearly of the same age, between fifty and sixty. One is Titian, the glory of Venice ; the other is Michael Angelo, the glory of Florence and Rome. Titian is a man strongly built, full of life and movement ; the proportions of his face are perfect, the forehead high, the brow bold and projecting, the features finely chiselled.

TITIAN

Round his neck is the chain which indicates his knightly rank. He wears an ample cloak, showing beneath it a broad white collar, and sleeves of silver damask. There is a marked likeness between these two men—Titian and Angelo—in the fire of their eyes, the boldness of their brows, even in the lines of their beards, worn a little short and pointed, and the fineness of the hands which grasp each other in friendship. Angelo, visiting Venice, is greeted by Titian. And when the last gracious words have been spoken, and the assembly is dissolved, these two return to Titian's house. They stand for a moment looking into each other's eyes before separating for the night, and Angelo says some words which we cannot hear. If we could hear them we should know why Titian turns so sadly away to his solitary chamber, for they would tell us that another face has faded out of the picture of his life, that the years which have brought riches and honour have taken from him his wife and the mother of his children.

TITIAN AT HOME

Extract from a letter written by Priscianese to a friend in Rome, in the year 1540, Priscianese being at that time a visitor in Venice. The letter will be found in that treasury of information

TITIAN IN HIS GARDEN

on the history and traditions of the Renaissance—"The Life of Titian" by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle—as a review of which this sketch was originally written.

"I was invited on the day of the calends of August to celebrate a sort of Bacchanalian feast in a pleasant garden belonging to Messer Tiziano Vecellio, an excellent painter, as every one knows, and a person really fitted to season by his courtesies any distinguished entertainment. There were assembled with the said M. Tiziano, as like desires like, some of the most celebrated characters that are now in this city, and of ours; chiefly M. Pietro Arentino, a new miracle of nature; and next to him as great an imitator of nature with the chisel as the master of the feast is with the pencil, Messer Jacopo Tatti, called Il Sansovino; and M. Jacopo Nardi, and I; so that I made the fourth amidst so much wisdom. Here, before the tables were set out, because the sun, in spite of the shade, still made his heat much felt, we spent the time in looking at the lively figures in the excellent pictures of which the house was full, and in discussing the real beauty and charm of the garden, with singular pleasure and note of admiration of all of us. It is situated in the extreme part of Venice, upon the sea, and from it one sees the pretty little island of Murano and other beautiful places. This part of the sea, as soon as the sun

TITIAN

went down, swarmed with gondolas adorned with beautiful women, and resounded with the varied harmony and music of voices and instruments, which till midnight accompanied our delightful supper. Besides the most delicate viands and wines, there were all those pleasures and amusements that are suited to the season, the guests, and the feast. Having just arrived at the fruit, your letter came, and because in praising the Latin language the Tuscan was reproved, Arentino became exceedingly angry, and, if he had not been prevented, he would have indited one of the most cruel invectives in the world, calling out furiously for paper and inkstand, though he did not fail to do a good deal in words. Finally the supper ended most gaily."

TITIAN IN SAN MARCO

And still the Venice of Titian is growing more beautiful under the touch of the magician's hand. "Justitia" with the waving sword has for a long time been a familiar sight at the Fondaco. The "Assumption of the Virgin" over the altar in the Church of the Frari, lighted by a thousand tapers, glows with a splendour almost inconceivable. But how many more splendours have been added to these. The "Christ Bearing the Cross" at the

DOMUS DEI

Monastery of St. Andrea ; the Organ Frontal at the Gesuati, long since, like so many other of his works, destroyed by fire ; the " Jerome " of San Fantino ; the " Annunciation " and the Death of Peter Martyr " at SS. Giovanni é Paolo ; the " Angel and Tobit " at Santa Caterina ; the " Descent of the Holy Spirit " in Santa Maria della Salute ; the " visitation of St. Elizabeth " in the Convent of St. Andrea ; the " Entombment " in the Church of St. Angelo ; the " Presentation of the Virgin " in the Convent of the Carità ; the " St. John in the Wilderness " at Santa Maria Maggiore ; and above all the mosaics of St. Mark's.

Does this seem to us only a catalogue of ecclesiastical buildings ? If so we fail to realize the passion of Catholic sentiment with which many of the painters of the Renaissance were inspired. Think of Titian, designing the mosaics of St. Mark's—think of the reverence of the man for the religion of his fathers—of the artist for the most precious of the relics of a past age. San Marco was more to him than a subject for decorative treatment. Like Michael Angelo and St. Peter's, so Titian and St. Mark's have their story to tell. As he entered its portals he would read the inscription—*QUAM TERRIBILIS LOCUS ISTE NON EST HIC ALIUD NISI DOMUS DEI ET PORTA CÆLI*. Titian knew nothing of the intellectual questionings of Da Vinci, nor of the spiritual strivings of Angelo,

TITIAN

nor of the agnosticism of Correggio. To him the relics of the Saint, which rest beneath the altar—the altar itself with its *pala d'ora*—the sacrifice offered there daily—have but one meaning—

From Christ who sits upon the great white throne,
To Christ in the little shrine where pilgrims kneel,
It is Christ first, Christ last, and Christ alone :
The Dragon writhes beneath His bruised heel ;
The Mother holds the young God in mute appeal
For worship—veiled with incense, lost in light,
Drowned in sweet music—till the mystic seal
Is broken, and there is silence in God's sight.

This is none other than the House of God,
This is the gate of Heaven. The Apostles stand
With Mary and Mark, Christ in their midst, to greet
Those who will enter. Come—with naked feet—
Fearless—while yet the golden measuring rod,
And not the sword, is in the angel's hand.

Titian without his religion is not Titian—any more than San Marco without Christ is San Marco—or the Renaissance, without the great conflict between the old faith and the new, the Renaissance of Art. But Titian, in the eighth decade of his life, may be compared to a star in a constellation still shining after its fellows have set. Raphael has died, Correggio has died, Da Vinci has died, and though Angelo lingers in Rome, he has for a long time painted only for the Imperial City. Madrid and Paris and Augsburg clamour for the



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PLATE XXIV. THE CHRIST OF TITIAN

FROM THE PAINTING IN THE
ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

A VISIT FROM VASARI

work of Titian—threatening—persuading—because even his pencil cannot satisfy all their demands. The grave ecclesiastics at the Council of Trent turn from their anathemas to scan the latest canvas from his hand; and in London a foreign Prince, mated to an English Queen, whom he loves not, amuses himself with pretty “Magdalenes” and “Antiopes,” who do not fret him with complainings. As for Titian himself, he is getting old; his home has been twice made desolate, first by the marriage of his daughter, then by her death. And his son, Pomponio, the canon—there is trouble in store, for he is a spendthrift. And then, that young painter Tintoretto, who is at work in the Ducal Palace!—is it not time to begin to ask what will the end be?

NEARING THE END

But the end is not yet. Ten more years have passed away, and Vasari is a visitor in Venice. As we have read from the letters of Dürer the painter, and of Priscianese the scholar, so let us turn for a moment to the record of the historian. “Titian has enjoyed health and happiness unequalled, and has never received from Heaven anything but favour and felicity. His house has been visited by all the princes, men of letters, and

TITIAN

gentlemen who ever came to Venice. And besides being excellent in art, he is pleasant company, of fine deportment and agreeable manners. He has had rivals in Venice, but none of any great talent. His earnings have been large. When the writer of this history, came to Venice in 1566, he went to pay a visit to Titian as a friend, and he found him, though very aged, with the brushes in his hand, painting, and had much pleasure in seeing his pictures, and conversing with him. Titian having decorated Venice and Italy, and other parts of the world with admirable pictures, deserves to be loved and studied by artists, as one who is still doing works deserving of praise, which will last as long as the memory of illustrious men."

THE CHRIST OF PITY

The last sketch—and it is once more in the Church of the Frari. Troubles are gathering on the Venice of Titian thick and fast. The Great Council have, indeed, ordered that a picture of the battle of Lepanto shall be painted ; but that victory has cost Venice her life-blood. And now Pestilence, following the footsteps of War, is wielding its bloody scourge, and nearly a third of the citizens have been swept into the charnel-house. An old man, bent with the weight of

SANTA MARIA DOLOROSA

ninety-nine years, is in the sacristy, talking with the monks. He is pleading with them, he is disputing with them. "Dear to me," he says—"dear to me are the mountains of Cadore, and the rushing waters of the Piave, and the murmur of the wind in the pine-trees, where my home lies far away. But not there! In the city where I have laboured; in the church where I achieved my first triumph—bury me there! Promise to bury me there, and I will yet live to paint for you another 'Christ,' a 'Christ of Pity,' that shall be more near to what He is than any that has ever yet been painted, even as I am by so many years the nearer to seeing Him myself."

The plague struck him before the *Pièta* was finished, but the promise was redeemed. Santa Maria Gloriosa has become Santa Maria Dolorosa. For Titian lies beneath the Crucifix in the Church of the Frari at Venice.

With Titian died the glory of Venetian Art. But as the setting sun is sometimes followed by an after-glow—a lingering, that is, of light—not really brighter than the horizon has been during the day, but seeming brighter because the rest of the firmament is darkening into night—so, after Titian, we still turn towards Venice for the sake of two painters who were at least worthy to be his companions to the last, and who, in surviving

TITIAN

him, arrested for another decade the extinction of the great Venetian school. Twelve years after Titian, in 1588, Paul Veronese died, and in another six years, Tintoretto. Then even the short after-glow faded, and the night set in. A night that the pale starlight of Salviati, Giovane, Padovanino, Canaletto, and Tiepolo could not illuminate; a night not pleasant to look back upon; a night disturbed by evil dreams; but happily a night, that has at last ended. In 1645 Venice was again at war. The old enemy, the Turk, descended upon Candia, and for twenty years the nation which had been so great in Art became the cynosure of Europe for its feats in arms. Volunteers from every country came there to exercise their valour, to acquire the military art, and to assist a brave people. The siege cost the lives of two hundred thousand Moslems, but the Venetians capitulated at last. A few years of respite followed, and then another war, in which, though the Republic was victorious, her resources were exhausted; and finally, while the dawn was still far distant, at the close of the eighteenth century, Venice, which had sold its nobility as merchandise, was itself sold as merchandise to the Austrians.

It is a terrible story, and belongs rather to the pages of History than to the literature of Art. But when the unworthy descendants of a Dandolo surrender without a struggle the independence of

THE VENICE OF ITALY

a thousand years, it is vain to look amongst them for men worthy to be the successors of a Titian. When the Queen of the Adriatic is content to see her "Golden Book," the record of her senators, burned in the market-place, it is time for three ships of the line and two frigates to sail out of her harbours laden with spoils of the richest of her treasures of Art. Is there—can there be—an ending to such a night as this ?

Yes, the dawn has come at last. Venice has been redeemed. It is indeed no more the Venice of Titian, any more than it is the Venice of Dante or Byron. It is the Venice of the new world, not of the old. It is the Venice of Italy. All that is beautiful in the eyes of the painter is still there ; all that is dear to the poet is to be remembered of her. But the glory which streams along the heights of blue Friuli's mountains is no longer a dying glory, but a living. For the sons of Italy are once more united and strong. How then can it be otherwise with her daughters than that they shall be happy and safe ?

RAPHAEL



LA MADRE. *But the child? Why must you paint the child? It is my portrait only that my husband desires.*

RAPHAEL *I must paint the child because of the Angel.*



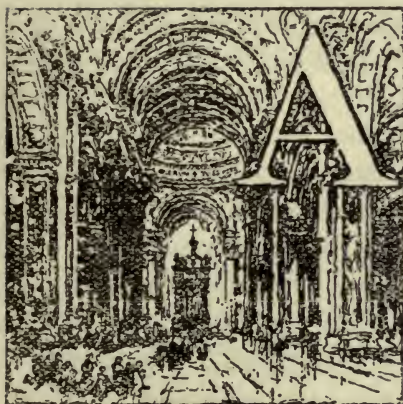


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raphaello In Urbino

PLATE XXV. FROM THE PAINTING
IN THE PITT PALACE

RAPHAEL



ND now we come to the youngsters of the group. Are not three old men sufficient in a little company of five? Raphael did not live to grow old—nor did Correggio. If we compare the period of the Re-

nascence of Art with the ordinary course of a natural year, from January to December, it is as though Leonardo Da Vinci had been the first to break the frozen earth ; that in March Angelo and Titian had been sent to sow the seed with him ; that Raphael and Correggio had come with the

RAPHAEL

flowers in May—and in August and September had carried away their sheaves rejoicing ; that Da Vinci had died during the harvest ; and that Angelo and Titian had lingered through the golden Autumn, till the fields were dark, and the earth once more frozen with the closing of the year. We know that with the new year new men came—Rubens, and Claude, and Velasquez, and Murillo, and Vandyke, and Rembrandt—but that is the sequel to my story—not to be anticipated.

At this moment an incident occurs of more than ordinary interest. Just as Raphael is beginning his career in Rome, while Michael Angelo is painting in the Sistine Chapel, one more of the antique statues—perhaps the most famous of them all—is discovered, and purchased by Julius II. for the Vatican. It is the marble group known as the Laocöon. The finding of this statue marks an epoch in the history of Art. It must have been to Michael Angelo as great a revelation as was the first reading of the Bible to Luther. The question at issue had been whether the grand forms of the Antique could be reconciled with realistic fidelity to Nature. In the Laocöon came at least an approach to an answer. The group expressed passion ; it was true to Nature ; and yet it was Classic Art. At the time of its discovery Angelo was designing his great painting of the *Dies Iræ* ;

THE LAOCÖON

and we can trace in the mighty limbs of the avenging God, and of the men called to the bar of judgment, something of the modelling of the Trojan hero and his sons struggling in the coils of the serpents. The problem which had been so long before the Schools was solved—once and for ever. It is possible through classic forms to express the passion of human life, as surely as the beauty of the human form.

The newly-discovered statue, however, played so momentous a part in the evolution of the Renaissance that we shall do well to consider it a little carefully. The subject is taken from a passage in Virgil. A priest of Apollo is offering sacrifice to Neptune with solemn pomp on the sea shore. By his side are two children. Suddenly, from the waves of the sea, come horrible monsters, cruel and fierce serpents. Swiftly they advance towards Laocöon—

And first about the tender boys they wind,
Then with their fangs their limbs and bodies grind.

The father attempts to save his children ; but in vain. In an instant he also is in the dreadful coils of the serpents, and his terrific shriek is in our ears as the scene closes. This is the incident chosen by the sculptors, and how do they render it ? The convulsed limbs, the quivering flesh, represent

RAPHAEL

the torture of the body—the agonised glance to heaven tells of the conflict of the soul.

But I turn to the writings of one who is committed to the theory that the standard of Art is Greek Art—and that Greek Art does not permit the expression of passion. “The Laocöon,” says a distinguished Professor, in the pages of a colossal Encyclopædia, “may be regarded as the triumph of Grecian sculpture; since bodily pain—the grossest and most ungovernable of our passions—and that pain united with anguish and torture of mind—is softened into a patient sigh. The horrible shriek which Virgil’s Laocöon emits is a proper circumstance for Poetry; the expression of it would have totally degraded Art.”

What would the young Raphael have thought of such criticism as this—if he had discovered it in an Encyclopædia of the day adorning the shelves of the library of the Vatican? I think he would have strolled into the Sistine Chapel, and shown it to Michael Angelo, and the two would have laughed over it together. For, while it is true that in Greek Art we find no expression of pain, in the Laocöon pain is expressed with a vividness of realism, almost without a parallel in the art of sculpture. But the Laocöon is not Greek Art. It was executed at a Roman Court—under Roman patronage—in illustration of a Roman poem—centuries after Greece had become a Roman

PLAYING AT MARBLES

province. It represents in Art the transition from the severe serenity of Hellas to the stormy atmosphere of the Capitol. Moreover, if the Laocöon does not express passion, so far from being a triumph of Hellenic sculpture it is nothing more than a clever anatomical model. In a word—it is not Art at all—it is Science.

But it is not Professors alone, or Encyclopædists, or Admirals of the British Fleet, who possess the accommodative apparatus of a blind eye. Voluntarily, or involuntarily, "the other side of the question" is almost invariably overlooked by amateur writers on Art. In Art, however, not to see is as fatal to a right judgment as to see falsely. In my old student days at the British Museum, a Royal visit was announced. The lads and lasses of the classes, however, were not driven from the gracious presence. Some of us stood to our easels—other some retired modestly behind convenient pedestals. Among the visitors was a beautiful lady, with her two boys—who for all I know may be sitting upon thrones now. As the illustrious group reached the gallery containing the sculptures of the Parthenon, we were privileged to hear a little conversation. "These," said their learned guide, "are the Elgin marbles." "Dear me," replied the lady, "I always thought that marbles were round."

RAPHAEL

That is the effect of the *blind eye*, as distinct from the *crooked vision*. To the painters of the Awakening—to Margaritone, Cimabue, and Giotto, perhaps even to Fra Angelico—there must have been a blank comparable to this. But not to Raphael. If the painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had not seen the gods, it was because—as in the case of the Spanish fleet—“they were not yet in sight!” But Raphael *had* seen them. Whether Raphael played at marbles when a boy, and assumed that marbles are necessarily round, there is no evidence to show. But it is certain that he had slept upon Parnassus before he entered the schools, and knew the difference between a cherub and a cupid. To Leonardo da Vinci, and Michael Angelo, and Titian, the discovery of the antique statues had come as sudden and surprising visions—one at a time—as if the Immortals had occasionally descended from Olympus to encourage them in their Art. First came Phœbus—the Apollo Belvedere—to show them the serene beauty of a god. Then Aphrodite—the Venus di Medici—to show them how lovely a woman could be. Then Herakles—the Hercules Farnese—to show them the strength of a hero. But Raphael found all these in full possession of the studio. They were his by inheritance. The ideas they created in his mind were definite. He found that Christian Art and Pagan Art agreed



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PLATE XXVI. PARNASSUS. FROM THE FRESCO BY RAPHAEL

MOUNT OLYMPUS

in this—that they took the human form as the exponent of what they had to express. He found that they differed, in that through the human form they expressed sentiments wide as the Poles asunder. Classic Art tells us everything that can be told of the strength, and grace, and beauty of the human form ; but of the life itself, of which these things are only the manifestation, it tells us nothing. Sorrow is an evil thing—why should it find perpetual remembrance in Art ? Pain will touch our bodies, be they ever so fair—but we need not mar our statues with its cruel touch ! We seek the beautiful, and suffering is not beautiful ; so, though its anguish may crush our lives, yet in Art at least we can cast it from our sight. And thus sorrow, and suffering, and pain, were excluded from Classic Art—but at what a cost ! There can be no compassion without suffering, no deep sympathy without sorrow, no heroic endurance without pain. In losing these things, therefore, Art lost also the expression of all the tenderest and noblest emotions of which our natures are capable.

But that was Mount Olympus—where the gods reigned ; a mount covered with pleasant woods, and caves, and grottoes ; on its top were neither wind, nor rain, nor cloud, but an eternal Spring. The face of the Christian painter, however, was set towards another Mount—where One suffered—

RAPHAEL

and from whence the Message came to him. It was as though the Greek had seen the Angel, but amidst the laughter of the gods had not heard the Message. It was as though the Christian had heard the Message—but in the darkness of Calvary failed to see the divine beauty of the Angel.

It is as the great reconciler of these two ideals that Raphael stands supreme. But it would be well for lovers of Art, if they could read, and think, and write, about Raphael without hysterics. The sober truth is sufficient to fill the mind with noble thoughts, and make one conscious of the presence of a great genius. *I want to get clear of the blind eye, and of the crooked vision—and, in the presence of Raphael himself, to understand his aim, his method, his achievement.* Again I turn to a distinguished critic, and beg from Schlegel an introduction to the mind of the painter. Schlegel, being a German, is of course a philosopher. Listen to him, commenting upon Raphael's Saint Cecilia—in the gallery of Bologna. The figure of the girl is so lovely that I have selected it as one of my illustrations. But the whole picture contains many more figures of astonishing beauty. "There is in it," says Schlegel, "a ravishing sentiment of intense, inward devotion, which, incapable of being restrained within the narrow limits of the human heart, breaks forth in song—everything



PLATE XXVII. THE CHRIST OF RAPHAEL

FROM THE PAINTING OF
THE TRANSFIGURATION

A GERMAN PHILOSOPHER

melting away in a devout inspiration of silent devotion, like the long drawn solemn tones of a cathedral organ." And again—"St. Paul, with the mighty sword, reminds us of those old melodies which could melt rocks, tame savage beasts, and tear soul and spirit asunder." Again—"The harmonious grandeur of the Magdalene, resembling the Madonna, reminds us of the pure unisons resounding in the abode of blessed spirits. The soul of Cecilia seems as if soaring on a ray of dazzling brightness to meet the harmony descending. The child-like ring of little angels are a divine reverberation of the harmony." And once more—as if all that were not enough—Schlegel adds, "The holy hymn reposes on a basis of transparent foreground ; but the execution is in the highest degree solid."

This is no doubt intended to be complimentary to Raphael. But would Raphael have liked it ? I think not. The greater part of it of course means nothing ; but where it does mean anything it is untrue. A thing cannot be silent if it is like the sound of a cathedral organ. The heavenly choir is not a child-like ring of little angels. The sword on which St. Paul lays his hand is not particularly large ; but Schlegel has missed entirely the fine symbolism of it—the sword is naked. All this, however, is the effect of the blind eye. But now the crooked vision comes in. What could have

RAPHAEL

wounded Raphael so deeply as the suggestion that he failed to discriminate between the loveliness of the Madonna, and the beauty of the woman with a past? That charge might have been brought against some of the painters of the Renaissance—but not against the painter of the Madonna di San Sisto.

I do not care then for Schlegel's introduction to Raphael. I would rather venture into the painter's presence alone, as an unknown visitor; or spend a day in the Loggia of the Vatican; or stand before his cartoons and think it out for myself. And yet, in a matter of such great moment as the interpretation of the works of a world-renowned painter, I should like to be able to fall back upon some world-renowned authority. Perhaps the German mind is too philosophical. I will turn to France. France, we know, is the inner shrine of the Temple of Art, and Frenchmen are the high priests of the cult. Very well, then—I take up a volume by the Secretary of the French Academy. It is the famous *Reflections on Poetry and Art*, by the Abbé du Bos. The Abbé is describing how, in the cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, Raphael has given to every head a different character, corresponding closely with the known characteristics of the Apostles. One head in particular he points out as a marvellous impersonation of

A FRENCH ACADEMICIAN

Judas. The expression, he says, is sullen and confused, as though the traitor was consumed with black jealousy."

Now this figure—which the Abbé supposes to be Iscariot—the reverend author of a famous Dictionary of Painters, claims as one of the faithful disciples ; urging that Raphael could not have been guilty of so gross an anachronism as to have introduced so infamous a wretch into the company of the Apostles—considering that at the time of the miracle Judas was already dead ! And to this he adds naïvely—"The best apology that can be made for the Abbé is that he was much better acquainted with the works of Raphael than with the work of the Evangelists."

This, coming from one churchman to another, is sufficiently severe. It does not, however, bring us any nearer to Raphael. How much either of the divines had read of the sacred narrative I know not—but both of them are in error. The miracle occurred twice. The subject of Raphael's cartoon is the calling of Peter to the Apostleship—not the appearance of our Lord after His resurrection. At that time the number of the Apostles was not complete—Judas was not one of the Twelve.

Thus the criticism which begins with a sort of apotheosis of the thing criticised ends with a disputed claim, whether the same face is a splendid realization of the evil passions of the arch-traitor,

RAPHAEL

or an equally splendid realization of the tender affection, and awe-struck reverence, of a faithful disciple greeting his risen Lord.

But where is the painter all the while ? and what ideas are forming in our own minds regarding his work ? France has not enlightened us any more than Germany. Let us come back to England. We come back to meet the rebound. Before Raphael stands the iconoclast instead of the worshipper. The hammer has taken the place of the thurible ; and the dust which goes up to heaven, as the works of the great painter are smitten to the ground, veils from us their splendour as effectually as did the incense of their apotheosis. To Mr. Ruskin it is but a small matter to have demolished such painters as Claude, and Cuyp, and Poussin, and Salvator Rosa, and Ruysdael, and Tenniers, and Paul Potter, with Vandervelde, Backhuysen, “ and various other Van-somethings and Back-somethings, who especially and malignantly have libelled the sea.” But having committed these to the flames, he passes to the one painter of whom it is not too much to say that from him every artist born into the world for four hundred years has learned his Art. Mr. Ruskin informs us that from the time he came of age the cartoons of Raphael began to take to him “ the aspect of a mild nightmare.” In his later years

AN OXFORD PROFESSOR

the nightmare ceased to be mild, it became very severe indeed. He assures us that Raphael could think of the Madonna only as an available subject for the display of skilful tints, transparent shadows, and clever foreshortenings—as a fair woman forming a pleasant piece of furniture for the corner of a boudoir. And then, after describing with exquisite pathos the apparition of Jesus to His disciples on the Lake of Galilee, he contrasts Raphael's painting of it with the actual occurrence. He says: "Note the handsomely curled hair, and neatly tied sandals of the men, who have been out all night in the sea mists and on the slimy decks. Note the convenient dresses for going a-fishing—with trains that lie a yard along the ground—and the goodly fringes, all made to match—an Apostolic fishing costume! Note how St. Peter, especially, whose chief glory was his wet coat girt about his naked limbs, is enveloped in folds and fringes so as to hold the keys with grace. And the Apostles are not around Christ, as they would have been, but straggling away in a line, that they may all be shown. Beyond is a pleasant Italian landscape, full of villas, and churches. The whole thing is a mere absurdity and faded decoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads; and the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ are blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael."

RAPHAEL

But when a painter wins his way into the hearts of the people of many nations, and holds his place there for four centuries, it is probable that his work expresses something more than Schlegel's, "silent harmonies of pure unisons," or Ruskin's "decoction of fringes and curly heads." *If therefore we can discover what these men have left out of account we shall find the real Raphael.* It is for the real Raphael that I plead. If Raphael is to be anything to any one of us—he must find his way into our hearts through his own works. There are a few principles—not opinions—but principles, we should do well to remember. Nature is complete—always and everywhere complete, comprehending all the splendour of life and passion as well as of material beauty. Art can but reflect these things as visions seen through a broken mirror. Nature includes all. Art is eclectic, choosing one phase or another as it affects the mind of the artist, or as he can interpret it through his material. To complain that Raphael was not a realist is as futile as to complain that the sculptor does not distinguish between brown eyes and blue. When a man is suffering from nightmare, however, his judgment is not at its best. Mr. Ruskin has failed to perceive that Raphael's cartoons are not transcripts from nature, but symbols of the History of the Church. One subject is Christ's Charge to Peter—that is, the Giving of the Keys. How shall the

IMPERIAL PURPLE

keys of Heaven and Hell be painted, except by symbol ? Will they not turn in their locks unless they are of Chubb's patent ? The Sheep—for whom Christ died—are symbols. Should Raphael have anticipated Sidney Cooper, by making it clear that they were Southdowns ? The villas and churches are Italian. Is not Italy then within the Fold for which Peter should care ? Peter himself is a symbol—of the Church. Not of the Church suffering, nor the Church militant—but the Church ruling. And the insignia of rule is the purple of princely garments.

No doubt the two conceptions of the subject are very wide apart. Which was the nobler, where both are so noble, it is not necessary to determine. But taking the highest ground, Raphael's ideal was not less truthful than that of his critic. Mr. Ruskin dwells on the scene until the very ground seems hallowed by the Master's footsteps, and he would not lose the sea-mist, or the dripping garments, or the dishevelled hair—are they not all parts of the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender story ? All this might have been also in Raphael's mind. Yet he broke clean through the accessories, and seeing beyond them the Divine Majesty of Christ, and the glory almost divine of the Prince of the Apostles, dared to express these things through the splendour of symmetry and grace.

RAPHAEL

✓ We have by this time seen Raphael under many disguises. We have seen him first, as the painter of Madonnas, which remind a German professor of the Magdalen. Then, as the painter of a face so expressive that it will serve a French Academician either for the arch-traitor, or for a true disciple. Last of all, we have seen him as the painter of the Oxford "decoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads." But is this really the last disguise? I fear not. Raphael has yet to be presented to us as the painter of "nothing in particular." Robert Browning says—

Raphael made a century of sonnets;
Made, and wrote them in a certain volume,
Dinted with the silver pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas.

Now of all things I will not be hypercritical. That the quality of poetry does not depend upon the pen or pencil used—that Raphael, being a skilled craftsman, would not have dinted the paper—these things matter very little. What does matter is that so great a poet as Browning should say that he would rather see that volume than all the Madonnas Raphael ever painted—*because to read those sonnets so written would be to listen to the beating of the heart of Raphael himself.*

✓ This is indeed the giving away of Art. Is it then the tribute of a poet to the superiority of his

THE
MADONNA DI SAN SISTO
FROM THE ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN



Hanfstaengl

PLATE XXVIII THE MADONNA DI SAN SISTO
FROM THE ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

AN ENGLISH POET

own cult ? By no means. For in the next stanza Browning deals with poetry precisely as he had dealt with painting. He says—

Dante once prepared to paint an angel—
You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not ? than read a fresh Inferno.

This is nothing less than the very undoing of Poetry and Art alike. For, think what it means, if it has any meaning at all. It means that the highest expression of a man's heart and brain is to be looked for—if he be a poet in his amateur sketches—if he be a painter in his attempts at versification.

Is there any remedy for fantasies such as these—the fantasies of professors, of ecclesiastics, of critics, of poets ? I know of none, except the touch of Ithuriel's spear. Eve lies asleep in Paradise. Gabriel, the archangel, has learned that an evil spirit has crept in through the gates. He gives to Ithuriel a troop of angels and charges them to search the garden for the arch enemy. The sun has set. Night has cast her shadow on the hills. The guard of angels can see but dimly through the perfumed air. Over and around them are laurel and myrtle, iris of all hues, roses and jessamine—at their feet is a mosaic of violet

RAPHAEL

and crocus and hyacinth. What malign form shall Ithuriel drag forth from such a hiding place ?

On he leads his radiant files
Dazzling the moon—
Him, there they found,
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,
Essayng by his devilish art to reach
The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions, phantasms, discontented thoughts,
Vain thoughts, vain aims, inordinate desires.

Milton does not say anything about unjust criticism, or invincible prejudice, or the blind eye ; but then, Milton's angels, although they included a "Michael" and a "Raphael," were not the Seven Angels of the Renaissance. Milton says only—

Him they found—the grisly king—
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve.
Him, Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly—for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness—
The fiend looked up, and fled,
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

And yet, after all, the old Paradise *was* lost. Who are the Angels of the Renaissance that they should save for us our Paradise of Art ? Which of them carries Ithuriel's spear ? I think that if we were Greeks we should build a temple to Truth, and consecrate Raphael as its high priest.

A DREAM IN FLORENCE

For the whole question of what is great in Art turns upon the faculty of seeing things in their true shape. The figure of St. Cecilia, as described in Schlegel's rhapsodies, is not a true shape—it is inflated ; but is that the fault of Raphael ? or not rather of Schlegel himself ? The kneeling Peter, assumes to Mr. Ruskin the proportions of a nightmare ; but is that through defect of the painter, or not rather of the professor ? It is good for the artist to dream sometimes—but there are dreams, and dreams. Are there not *Midsummer Nights*, and *Walpurgis Nights* ? I remember a lovely evening—and night—in Florence. The day had been very hot. Towards sunset there came a sudden chill. I had lingered over my painting too long at an open window. Then I discovered that I was very cold. That night I lay as if wrapped in flame. The mosquitoes sang to me the old song we know so well ; soprano—s-s-s ; alto—z-z-z-z ; tenore—m-m-m-m ; basso—boom-boom-boom, like the sound of *Mighty Tom* of Oxford. The four strings of a violin might have been tuned to their four voices. But they could not sing me to sleep. Across the square was *Santa Maria Novella*. Through the open window the cathedral and campanile looked in upon me as I looked out on them—before it fell dark. Down by the river was the *Uffizi* with Raphael's picture of the *Madonna and the Goldfinch*. Beyond the

RAPHAEL

Arno was San Miniato—and in the far distance, amongst the hills, Fiesole. I could hear on the pavement quick footsteps—of the black brothers of the Misericordia—ready in a moment to carry me to the Campo Santo. In the Accademia delle Belle Arti, close by, I knew that the young David—Michael Angelo's David—was watching to save me from the Philistines.

How much of all this was reality? How much of it was only dreaming? The curious thing is that every element of it that was *real* has vanished—while everything of the nature of a *dream* remains. The suffering was real, but it passed away, as I recovered. The mosquitoes were real—but they disappeared with the summer. The black brothers of the Misericordia were real, but it was another threshold that they crossed, not mine. Nothing of that wild night shall I ever see again, except its architecture, its sculpture, and a painting by Raphael. Perhaps Art is after all nothing but a dream. Very well, then, I say that even as a dream it is so great a thing, and our knowledge of it is so limited, that we cannot afford to let it pass, forgotten as a vision of the night. Still less can we afford to make of it a nightmare. If Art is only a dream, let us at least take care before we begin our dreaming that we do not fall asleep, like Eve, with a toad squat close to our ear.

RAPHAEL AND DA VINCI

And now a woman's voice is heard. The world has been talking about Raphael for a long while. But a woman began it. This very day, October 1st, just four hundred years ago, the beautiful Giovanna della Rovere—sister of the Duke of Urbino—wrote to her friend Solderini, the Gonfaloniere of Firenze, immortalized by his criticism of the nose of David. Raphael, she says, is visiting Florence, and his ambition is to meet the great painter, Leonardo da Vinci. "As his father was dear to me, so is the son; a modest youth, of distinguished manners. I bear him an affection on every account, and wish that he should attain perfection." Raphael, at the time, had just come of age. Look at him, as he passes into the presence of the veteran, and reverently kisses the hand laid gently upon his. He is slightly built, about five feet eight inches in height, of singular beauty, with features of almost feminine delicacy. His brown eyes are modest and expressive. His hair is rich and wavy, and of a lustrous brown. His face is oval, and of an olive tone. His manners are courtly and fascinating. His disposition is gentleness itself. If Da Vinci was the Apollo of the studio, I think Raphael must have been the Adonis.

It is surprising, however, how little is known of Raphael's life. Vasari fills scores of pages with descriptions of his pictures, but omits—if he ever

RAPHAEL

knew them—the thousand details which would be interesting to us. Vasari's opinions do not help us very much. But then Giorgio Vasari was only an Italian—and have we not heard the opinions of the wise men of Germany, and France, and England! Of the little that is known we gather that Raphael's childhood was passed at Urbino, where he was born in 1483. It is said of his mother, the gentle Magia—as it may be said of so many mothers whose sons have become men of genius—that he inherited his affectionate, tender, warm-hearted disposition from her. She died in his infancy, and the boy passed to the care of a step-mother, a woman less amiable than the mother he had lost. In a few more years his father, Giovanni Santi, who was himself a painter of repute, died also, and evil days threatened the lad—from which, however, he was rescued by his mother's brother.

Then comes his apprenticeship to Perugino. He had been painted by his father as one of the angels—now it became his turn to paint the angels himself. In his half-sister, Elizabetta, he found a fitting model. There is a beautiful drawing of her by her brother, which suggests not only how like the brother and sister were to each other, but that from Elizabetta he drew his first inspiration for the face of the Madonna.

At last the infamous tyranny of the Borgias

PONTIFICALIS

came to an end—by the tragic death of Alexander VI.—and Raphael was summoned to Rome by Julius II. At that time Rome was the centre of the world of Art, and the Pope was the dispenser of its highest patronage. But there were Popes before the fifteenth century. Are not their names registered in the Book of the Divine Comedy?—*pontifex martyrio coronatus*; *pontifex sacrosantissimus*; *pontifex eruditus*; *pontifex militaris*—*femininus*—*puerilis*—*hæreticus*—*corruptissimus*—of whom we find very lively reading not only in the Paradiso and Purgatorio, but especially in the Inferno. For a thousand years Christendom had resounded with Papal “Bulls.” Dante calls these years the ten silent centuries—because there were no poets to sing. If Dante called them silent, we may call them dark—for there were no painters. Poetry and Art were alike dead. To what do we owe their revival? The Renascence of Art is coincident with the establishment of the Inquisition! St. Peter’s, at Rome, was built with money obtained through the sale of Indulgences! It is a terrible indictment. But then, it is to be remembered also that the Renascence of Art is coincident with the Reformation.

In Raphael, however, we have a Catholic painter, pure and simple, and in his works we see the finest flower of Catholic Art. Raphael was not troubled with doubts, as was Michael Angelo; he was not

RAPHAEL

an unbeliever as was Correggio ; he had not, like Da Vinci, chosen philosophy, as an alternative to religion ; nor, like Titian, did he live far away, in a city in conflict with the Pope, and under the ban of excommunication. I do not say that Raphael was the subject of any deep religious sentiments, or that he held strong theological views, like Fra Angelico. But to him the train of St. Peter had a very real meaning ; the sword on which St. Paul leaned was a very real sword ; and the Madonna in which Schlegel thinks he sees a resemblance to the Magdalen, was more than a beautiful woman—she was the Mother of his God.

It is a little singular that in Protestant England Raphael should be represented almost exclusively by Catholic pictures. The cartoons, now at South Kensington, were designs for the decoration of the Pope's private chapel. The Madonna Ansidei, and the Archangels, in our National Gallery—the Holy Family in the Bridgewater collection—the Crucifixion, in the possession of the Earl of Dudley—these are all ecclesiastical subjects. Moreover, the paintings most widely known amongst us, by means of copies or engravings, are of the same character—the Transfiguration, the Madonna della Sedia, the Madonna di San Sisto. And yet these religious pictures represent only one phase of Raphael's work. More than half his life was given

PARNASSUS

to the painting of mythological and classic designs—of which we do not possess a single example. The chambers of the Vatican are rich with frescoes—allegories of Poetry, Theology, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Astronomy—with legends of Parnassus, of Apollo, of Cupid and Psyche, of Pan, of Galatea—of everything the imagination can conjure into beauty and grace.

Let us look for a moment at the painting of Parnassus. Apollo is seated beneath the laurels which overshadow the streams of Helicon. There are the Muses—see—they are listening. There is the fountain which sprang from the ground when struck by the feet of Pegasus. There is the blind poet—the old schoolmaster—the strolling bard—the father of poetry—for whom seven cities disputed, as Florence and Rome quarrelled over Michael Angelo. Homer is laurel-crowned, his head is raised, his hand outstretched, as though he were singing his immortal verse to the music of Apollo's lyre. And side by side with Homer is Pindar, the prince of the lyricists of Greece, and Virgil, the prince of the Latin poets. They, too, are listening—and with them Dante. Is he not also a prince in Apollo's kingdom?

Now turn to another of these frescoes. In a magnificent proscenium of classic architecture, are assembled the philosophers of ancient Greece. They are grouped in accordance with the historical

RAPHAEL

development of the Schools. There is Pythagoras, with his disciples. There is Socrates, with the young Alcibiades. There are Plato, and Aristotle. And still, group after group, come the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Cynics—each figure telling its own story of the evolution of philosophy—Euclid the geometrician, Ptolemy the astronomer, Zoroaster the magician. I have not space even to name the “fifty of the greatest of Earth’s children”—every one of whom must have been carefully studied by the painter. “The School of Athens” is indeed an achievement which may be compared with the “Cenacolo” of Milan, and the “Dies Iræ” of the Sistine. It places Raphael in scholarship on a level with Da Vinci, and in imagination on a level with Michael Angelo. I said that the picture contained fifty of the greatest of Earth’s children. Look again. There is still another. Who is that young man—beautiful to look upon?—to whom the astronomer and the magician turn. It is Raphael himself. And the globes they carry—terrestrial and celestial—are symbols of his domain. For in Art he was lord alike of Earth and Heaven.

Of Raphael’s life at the Papal Court very little is recorded: That he lived as a Prince, in his own house near the Vatican; that he loved Margarita, on the other side of the Tiber; that he was true to her, and she to him; that there is no record of

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS



Hanstaengl

PLATE XXIX. THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS. FROM THE FRESKO BY RAPHAEL

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

MARGARITA

their marriage ; that he steadily refused to make any other alliance ; that when he died he left his possessions to her—this is about all that Vasari tells us. It should be remembered, however, that the Court of the Vatican, even though the worst corruptions of the Borgias had been swept away, was not quite the place for a painter and his young wife. There had indeed been great reforms. The new Pope was carrying out a scheme for enlarging the Vatican into a Pontifical city, to be self-contained for all the officers and dignitaries of the Church. He marked his displeasure of the past by refusing even to live in the rooms which had been desecrated by the licentious Court of his predecessor. Nevertheless, celibacy was the order of the day, for dignitaries and servitors alike. Why should Raphael be exempt ? Julius and Leo sought for artists, to work—not young men and women to play. Margarita was not an artist, but a very pretty woman. It could very well have been understood that women were out of place in the household of the Pope ; and that the beautiful Margarita had better keep at home—or visit her husband at his work upon the sacred pictures only when he required a model for an angel—without being recognised as Signora Sanzi. I am not claiming for Raphael or for Margarita that they were more holy than His Holiness ; but I am content to believe no evil of them that cannot be

RAPHAEL

proved. Surely, an unrecognised marriage is not so strange a thing as to be incredible when it is attested by mutual fidelity.

The end came suddenly. Raphael had finished his *Madonna di San Sisto* ; the painting of the Transfiguration was still upon his easel when he was summoned to the presence of Leo—who desired to consult him as to some alterations in St. Peter's. The painter laid down his palette and hastened to the Vatican—where he arrived overheated and fatigued. There, in the open corridors he had adorned, he was taken with a chill, and returned to his house—only to die. The Pope, who was his true friend, was greatly concerned at his illness, and waited from day to day for tidings of his favourite painter. Within a fortnight, on the eve of Good Friday, a strange thing happened. Leo was seated in a chamber of the Vatican, rich with the designs of Raphael. Suddenly, the walls of the chamber collapsed, and the Pope fled from the ruins. As he escaped he was met by a messenger. Raphael was dead.

Raphael died, as did Shakespeare, on his own birthday. He was buried in the Pantheon, and it is said that all Rome crowded to the funeral. His scarcely finished painting of the Transfiguration—its colours still wet—was carried in procession—as Cimabue's *Madonna* had been carried

ADDÌO RAFFAELLO

in Florence, and hung over the altar. Between the dirges of the *Miserere* might be heard the weeping of the people—for Raphael was as much loved as he was admired. Listen now to a few echoes of voices which sang his praise, or recorded his virtues or lamented his untimely death. A group of mourners stand round his grave. There is the famous scholar, Cardinal Bembo, the Pope's Secretary; there are Count Baldassare, and Aquila, old friends of Raphael, and Giulio Romano his favourite disciple, and Ariosto the poet, and Vasari the recorder. If Angelo is not with them it is only because he is far away at Carrara and there has not been time for him to come.

DALL AQUILA. You knew him as a child?

DONNA GIOVANNA. I knew him as a child in his mother's arms. She was as gentle, and as beautiful, as her boy. But she died young.

COUNT BALDASSARE. And then?

DONNA GIOVANNA. Then his father painted him as an angel in our little chapel at Cagli. But the man married again—and died—and the child was left to the care of a woman—*matrigna*—and a priest, who did not care for him.

ARIOSTO. Well, well—he soon got over that.—He lived as a prince.

GIULIO ROMANO. Our Raffaello was a prince.

GIORGIO VASARI. In the world of Art.

RAPHAEL

CARDINAL BEMBO. And he might have been a Prince of the Church—for His Holiness named him for the “red hat.”

[The figure of a woman is seen lying prostrate before the altar with hands clasped in prayer.]

DONNA GIOVANNA. It is Margarita.

CARDINAL DE MEDICI. And he might have married a princess—but for that little Margarita of his. Nothing would induce him to give her up.

CARDINAL BEMBO. Hei, mihi! What can you do with a man like that?

GIULIO ROMANO. You can worship him.

GIORGIO VASARI. He was indeed god-like! Heaven accumulated upon his head all its treasures. Evil could not exist in his presence any more than darkness at the rising of the sun. His gracious nature subdued both man and beast—even the dumb creatures following his footsteps with mysterious affection. I will write it all in my book.

The work of Raphael is the manifestation of the fine quality in Art, for which I know no better definition than the word “balance.” He stood between two contending influences—the revival of Classic scholasticism, and the impulsive turning to Nature as the supreme Mistress. Of course Nature is supreme, in all schools—but what is

ONE OF FIVE

Nature ? Of course Classic Art is authoritative—but what is Classic Art ? The dangers on either side are—that in following the antique artists may lose touch with Nature—in following Nature they may lose the crown and glory of Art—the Ideal. Raphael was the great reconciler—the complete artist.

Raphael was one of five. If Da Vinci knew more—Raphael knew enough. If Titian's colour is more telling—Raphael tells enough. If Michael Angelo was more daring—Raphael was not deficient in courage. If Correggio painted the prettiest of women—Raphael painted the most beautiful. Tintoretto thought that if Titian had designed like Angelo, and Angelo had coloured like Titian, the world would have seen a perfect painter. But that is the same as saying that if the stars of a constellation had been all rolled together in one you would have had a bigger star. Yes—but you would have lost the glory of the heavens.

CORREGGIO



CORREGGIO. *Signora ! Signora ! I cannot let you go. I must paint you.*

LA SIGNORA. *Why do you desire to paint me—Messer Allegri ?*

CORREGGIO. *Because, Signora—because you are so beautiful—and I am tired of painting saints.*



PLATE XXX.

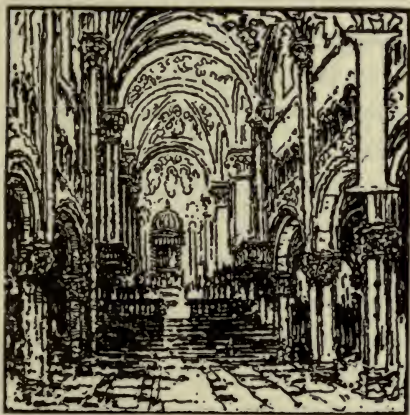


Manzoni

Antonio da Correggio

PLATE XXX. FROM A PAINTING IN
THE CATHEDRAL, PARMA

CORREGGIO



IF I were writing a novel in which Antonio Allegri—da Correggio—figured as the chief character, I would certainly begin with the dialogue that faces his portrait at the commencement of the chapter. It says nothing about the Angel—Correggio's face, indeed, does not suggest that sort of thing. But we can afford to wait. It is not necessary for a messenger to have a pretty face. The face of Hermes—who was the messenger of the gods—must have worn a more comical aspect even than

CORREGGIO

that of Correggio, for it was painted half black and half white, to indicate that he talked with gods and men. Now that is precisely what Correggio did. Whether La Signora should accede to his request by delaying her departure, would be determined as the story developed. But that the first and last desire of the painter was to paint things beautiful—and that this desire was the controlling influence which directed his Art—there should be no doubt. The conversation might indeed be carried a little further. “Let Raphael,” he might say—“Let Raphael paint angels in heaven, and Michael Angelo devils in hell; as for me, I am content to paint women.” “Is it not true then, Messer Allegri, that you paint angels sometimes?” “Ah, yes Signora—but then, my women *are* angels.”

It is not a novel, however, that I am writing. It is only a drama passing before my eyes—a drama in five acts—the drama of the Renaissance of Art. Moreover, there are five great actors in the play, and for a little while we see them all on the stage together. Michael Angelo and Raphael are painting in the Sistine Chapel, and the Stanze of the Vatican. Da Vinci is visiting Rome for the first time, where he interests the Pope more as an alchemist than as a painter. Titian has taken the place of the Bellini as head of the Venetian School,

ENGLAND AND THE RENASCENCE

and Correggio has painted his first masterpiece—the Madonna of St. Francis—for the altar of a church in the town where he was born, and from which he takes his name. Let us now see a little more of the *dramatis personæ* with whom these five chief actors played their several parts.

But there are other names and dates, of profound interest to us, that we should do well to consider. We, as Englishmen, are now of the number of the nations which unite to render the tribute of honour to these men—but it was not always so. There are some historical co-incidences which indicate our position in relation to the Renascence of Art. For instance, Da Vinci and Savonarola were born in the same year—1542.^{1452.} That interests us a little now, as Protestants—but we began our Wars of the Roses just at that time, and did not trouble ourselves much about the condition of the Fine Arts in Italy. By the time Lancaster and York had settled their differences we were busy with Caxton and his printing-press. One of the first books that came from Westminster Abbey, “The Game and Playe of the Chesse,” was just in time to be given as a school prize to little Michael Angelo! The pieces were being set, however, for a greater game than chess—a game at which nations should play—and for great stakes—to win or to lose. In 1483 Raphael was born—

CORREGGIO

and Luther. If Raphael was not on our side, Luther was—and we won. Raphael won too, if we measure by the splendour of his achievements. But while the Renascence of Art has perished, the Reformation has only just begun.

Had England then no part in the great revival of the Arts which made the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries so glorious? When Raphael died—in 1520—our Henry was engaged with the French King on the “Field of the Cloth of Gold.” If the two Kings chatted together, Francis may have told Henry of the Italian Leonardo, to whom he had given Royal honours in the mortuary chapel at Amboise—and Henry may have confided to Francis that a young Dutchman, of the name of Holbein, was coming over to London to paint his portrait, and that he, Henry, had a great scheme for establishing a School of Art in England for the weaving of more cloth of gold. It is but a brief record that history gives of these things, but it serves its purpose in reminding us how nations, as well as Schools of Art, are made. Henry’s scheme did not lead to much—at the time; but it bore fruit afterwards. We owe to it the possession of the cartoons of Raphael. They were designed by Raphael for the decoration of the Sistine Chapel, and had been worked in tapestry at Arras. Raphael had lived to see them in their

THE TWO CROWNS

beauty. But ah! what vicissitudes they have passed through. Within a few years of Raphael's death, Rome was pillaged, and the tapestries carried as spoils of war to France. They were sold in the market for the value of the gold threads with which they were wrought. Such tapestries have only to be burnt up—like small republics planted on too auriferous a soil—and the little yellow heap left in the crucible will show how precious they are! But Raphael's tapestries were redeemed, and hang in the Vatican to-day.

In the meantime the cartoons, the actual work of Raphael's hand, have come to us. They had lain forgotten in the workshops of Arras for a century, but at last, acting on the wise advice of Rubens, Charles I. bought them for his palace at Whitehall. Better still, a little later Oliver Cromwell bought them for the nation.

The record therefore even in Art is not altogether against us. But there is still another curious coincidence worth noting. In the year 1534, in which the last of the five great painters of the Renaissance—Correggio—died, the Papal Authority was finally abolished in England. Perhaps it is too much to expect a people to win the Crown of Liberty—and the Crown of Art at the same time.

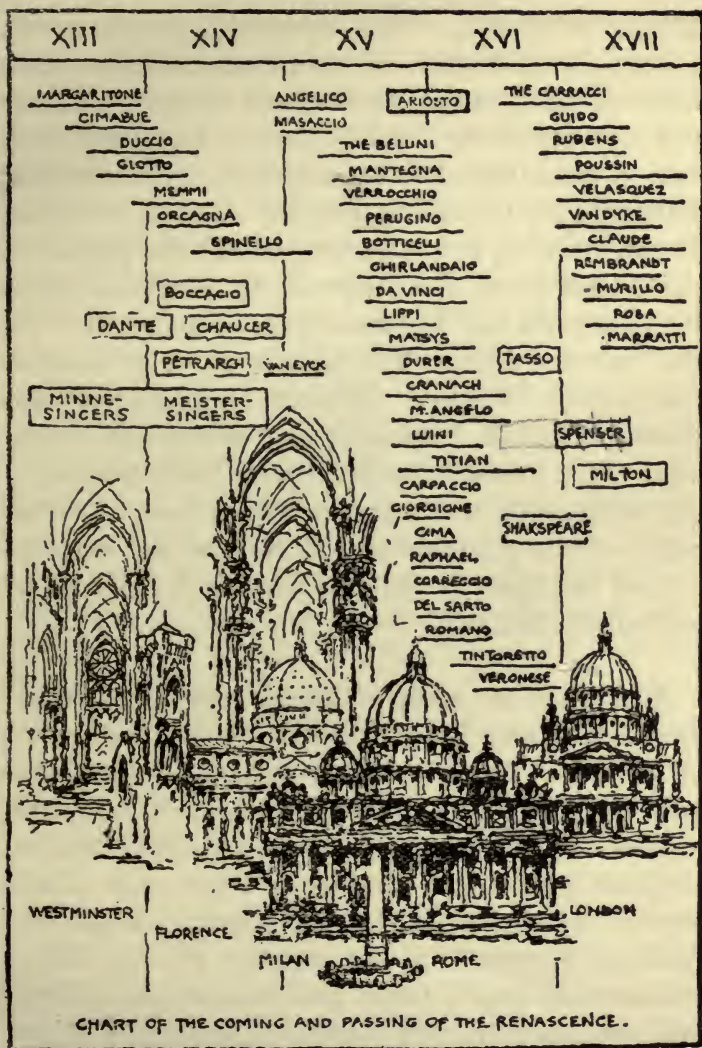
I will now ask the printer to leave me, over leaf, a blank page, on which I may, as I write, sketch

CORREGGIO

out in the form of a diagram, the position in which each painter stands in relation to the Renaissance, and the position of the Renaissance in relation to the history of Art. See, I divide the sheet of paper into five columns representing the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Then I draw horizontal lines with my pen—measured, each according to the length of the painter's life, and placed in position according to the date of his birth. Above the line I write the painter's name. How they flock together, these painters ! like birds migrating to the happy land where the sun shines. The diagram shows at a glance, more clearly than can be attained through any catalogue of dates and names, the rise and fall of the great Schools of which the Renaissance is the centre.

But if we turn once more to the diagram we shall see a few names beside those of the painters, and a little procession of spires, and domes, and arches—pointed and round. The names are of the poets who were the contemporaries of the painters ; the outlines are reminiscences of the cathedrals which were built during their lives. However much or little the Fine Arts may be affected by civil or religious strife, it is certain that the effect of Poetry and Architecture upon Painting is direct and lasting. The influence of Dante on Giotto can scarcely

FROM ST. PETER'S TO ST. PAUL'S



CORREGGIO

be over-estimated. Chaucer and the Chapel of St. George's at Windsor—Shakespeare and the landscape painters of the seventeenth century—Milton and Claude—these are not chance associations of men thrown together by accident. The lives of Margaritone, Cimabue, Duccio, Giotto, Orcagna, Simon Memmi, Fra Angelico—cover the period of the building of the Duomo of Florence. The Minnesingers, and Meistersingers of Germany were the companions of the Architects, who created Nuremberg. Chaucer saw the unfolding of the Rose in Lincoln Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. It is in each case the same force moving—but finding different forms of expression. For the army of the painters of the Renaissance were to a man engaged in the building or decoration of cathedral churches.

And what an army! There were the Bellini, in whose school Titian learned the first rudiments of his Art. There was Mantegna, of Padua, who inspired Correggio. There was Perugino, the master of Raphael. There was Julio Romano, Raphael's favourite disciple. There was Ghirlandaio, the master of Michael Angelo. There was Andrea Verrocchio, the master of Da Vinci. Master and pupil, pupil and master, the roll-call still goes on; for the mantle of Leonardo fell on Luini—the painter of that wonderful fresco in the

THE ROLL-CALL

Church of the Angels at Lugano. Then there were Andrea del Sarto—the painter without a fault ; and Luca Signorelli, whose strong work influenced even Michael Angelo ; Lorenzo di Credi—distinguished both as a painter and as a sculptor ; Lippi the younger—who completed the frescoes which Masaccio had left unfinished ; Piero di Cosimo—eccentric, but full of genius ; Squarcione—who died before the battle commenced, but inspired others with courage ; Vivarini—one of the earliest of the Venetians to see the splendour of colour ; Carpaccio—counted second only to the Bellini ; Cima—who, for his mastery of drawing and composition has been called the Masaccio of Venice ; Giorgione—who, had he lived, might have been the rival of Titian. To these must be added at least two stars of the first magnitude—Paolo Veronese, and Tintoretto. See—how the roll-call lengthens under my pen ; yet it contains only the names of captains of the host, and is by no means complete. It suffices, however, to show that if our five great painters form a constellation, it is a constellation set in a heaven already full of stars.

What was the vital force which held these men together ? What were the differences which separated them into schools ? What were the principles of Art common to them all—which we may expect to find exemplified in all their works ?

CORREGGIO

What lies at the root of the vehement fault-finding and hysterical adulation which disfigures the writings of so many critics, who on other matters write sanely enough? Is it possible to see and appreciate the glory of each without being blind to the glory of the others?

Five questions—which can be answered only through a complete study of the five great painters. It is not enough to know that Da Vinci was a scholar; that Titian was a colourist; that Angelo was a dreamer; that Raphael was an “all round” artist. We have yet to see what it was that differentiated Correggio from the four, and yet placed him on an equality with each.

Now, four of our five questions are already answered. Leonardo da Vinci has taught us that the vital force which held all these Schools together was the recognition of our common humanity as the objective of Art. From the Christ seated in the midst, to the traitor clutching the purse, he covers with his knowledge all that the classic, and medieval, and modern schools had attempted. Michael Angelo teaches us quite a different lesson, viz., that the differences which divide the Schools are the differences of the sentiments they seek to express. His Christ on the Throne of Judgment, and his Child-Christ caressed by Mary and Joseph, are based on classic forms; but in spirit they are

HIS SPECIAL GIFT

as far apart from the Greek as Christianity is distinct from Paganism. From Titian we learn the one universal principle in Art—that the highest cannot be attained without sacrifice—that the painter cannot make the best of two worlds—that if saints and angels are to be good flesh and blood, they cannot at the same time be celestial ether. Raphael has discovered to us—through his critics and admirers—that the restraint of perfect balance is, to minds which seek only a stimulant in Art, the one intolerable offence which can never be forgiven.

And Correggio. What do we learn from Correggio? In what relation does he stand to Michael Angelo and the rest? The battle of the Renaissance had been fought; a battle against prejudice, reaching almost to superstition. And the masters had quarrelled over it. Michael Angelo, called Perugino “a dunce”; and Perugino sued Michael Angelo in the courts for libel. It is not known how that suit ended; but the victory of the new movement was not doubtful. The expression of passion became established, not only as legitimate, but as one of the highest achievements of Art.

The victory then had been won before Correggio was called to arms. He did not come to do again what Michael Angelo and Raphael, and Da Vinci, and Titian had done. He came to give to their work the crown of beauty. Michael Angelo had

CORREGGIO

shown that Art could express strength and passion without being brutal—Correggio showed that it could also express sweetness and grace without being weak.

The story of Correggio's life is quickly told. Antonio Allegri—for that was his real name—was born in 1494, at Correggio, a small town near Parma. He was of good parentage ; and, being intended for one of the learned professions, was made to follow the usual course of study in rhetoric and poetry. At a very early age, however, he was brought under the attractions of Art. He learned its rudiments in the studio of Lorenzo—his father's brother—and its fascinations proved too strong to be resisted. The boy was allowed to pursue the bent of his genius.

But Correggio—for I will not take from him the name by which he has been known for four hundred years—Correggio never lost touch with the intellectual forces which had surrounded him in early life. An Academy, or Literary Society, had been founded in the little town ; and was visited by professors from Bologna—just as in England many a local Institution is visited by men distinguished in science or letters. The friendships Correggio thus formed in his study of philosophy remained unbroken to the last.

But while Correggio was still a lad, the scourge



Hanfstaengl

PLATE XXXI. HOLY FAMILY. CORREGGIO

FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY

MASTER MANTEGNA

of the Middle Ages fell on the little town—as it fell again and again on the Rome of Raphael, and the Venice of Titian. The family of the Allegri were driven out by the plague. They found refuge in Mantua—and there, when the plague was stayed, and they returned to their home, the young painter remained, given wholly to the study of Art. And this was the turning point in his life. Mantua was a great centre for the Fine Arts—containing many noble galleries of paintings and sculpture. It was there that Correggio received his first and deepest impressions. The Master of the school was Mantegna—a venerable senior, older than Titian, older than Michael Angelo, older even than Da Vinci. The Duke of Mantua had brought him from Padua, as his friend, more than forty years before the young Correggio came under his influence. Mantegna had time to assimilate the excellencies of many schools, and Correggio duly worshipped at his shrine.

But time moved quickly with the lad. At the age of twenty he was himself amongst the Masters—painting his first great altar-piece, for his native town—the famous “Madonna of St. Francis,” now in the Dresden Gallery. The Madonna is enthroned in a glory of light, with the Holy Infant upon her knees. It is the light of heaven—for as it melts into the twilight of our vision it takes the form of a company of angels, bending

CORREGGIO

over her to gaze upon the Divine Child. On her right, at the foot of the throne, are, St. Francis adoring, and St. Anthony of Padua. On her left, John the Baptist, and St. Catherine with the sword. The wheel on which she was broken lies at her feet—for she has triumphed, and bears the victor's palm.

It is thought that in this picture may be traced the various influences which had controlled Correggio in his early studies. Some perceive in it a reflexion of Mantegna ; others, of Da Vinci. That, however, is only the process of evolution in Art, as it is also in Nature. Not until the petals are unfolded to the light can you discern the full glory of the flower. White and red roses begin by being very much alike.

And yet it is worth noting, that the subject of his first picture, as well as of his last—it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say the subject of almost every picture he ever painted—was a woman. There is one indeed—the picture by which he is best known in England—the “ Ecce Homo ” in our National Gallery, which shows that if his range of vision was limited it was limited by his own choice—not by any deficiency of virile strength to express passion at its highest and best. But the exceptions seem to emphasise the rule. In Mr. Compton Heaton's admirable “ Life of



PLATE XXXII. THE CHRIST OF CORREGGIO

FROM THE "ECCE HOMO" IN
THE NATIONAL GALLERY

CORREGGIO'S CHOICE

Correggio " will be found a catena of his principal works. His chief frescoes are the " Assumption of the Virgin," in the Cathedral of Parma ; " Diana returning from the Chase," in the Convent of San Paolo ; " The Coronation of the Virgin," in the Choir of San Giovanni ; the " Madonna della Scala," painted over the Porta Romana ; and the "Annunciation," in the Church of the Annunziata. But is there not one more ? Yes—there is " The Ascension of Christ," with the twelve Apostles, four Evangelists, and the four Fathers of the Church ! What room is there for women here ? Look again, and you will see that the picture is made beautiful for ever by the introduction of a frieze of Amoretti dancing round the sacred dome. The same thing is observable of his easel pictures. Of twenty-seven which are indisputably from his hand no fewer than fifteen are Madonnas, or Magdalens, and seven are goddesses or nymphs ; while three only are of general subjects ; and two are of Christ.

And the reason is not far to seek. Correggio was an artist—pure and simple ; and he painted that which was dear to his eyes. Correggio had no laboratory attached to his studio ; he had no world of science or physics to conquer ; the learning which fascinated Da Vinci did not fascinate him. Correggio was not a dreamer like Michael Angelo ; he knew nothing of heaven or hell save

CORREGGIO

what the priests told him ; he did not sigh for the regeneration of the age. Correggio did not see the jewellery of light and colour as Titian did—nor had he the complete vision of Raphael. But he did see women, and discovered that they look very beautiful—in pictures. In painting them he won the suffrages of the majority of our race. For there are more women in the world than men, and they know that they are beautiful, and that Correggio painted them—if not always as saints, at least as goddesses. In doing this Correggio won also the suffrages of the minority.

How simple it all seems. How strange—that since the Greeks carved the statues of Aphrodite and Psyche, and Diana, and Juno, it should never have occurred to the artist that it was sufficient to be a woman, without being a saint—or a sinner. Correggio, during his early manhood, was greatly influenced by the general revolt against the superstitions of the Middle Ages. But there is no record of his having himself taken part in the spiritual conflict. Between the passionate appeals of Savonarola, of which he must have heard at least the echoes, but which did not move him—and the renewed Sale of Indulgences, for which he had only contempt, he seems to have found refuge—as when a child he had found refuge from the plague in a neighbouring city—in a kind of semi-

VASARI ON HEAVEN

paganism. He attempted to escape from what he felt to be the trammels of Sacred Art, into the freedom of the realms of Mythology.

It is not to be inferred, however, from this that Allegrì abandoned himself to the licentious habits of the age. The testimony of his contemporaries is quite irreconcilable with such a supposition. There is scarcely a writer who does not indicate by some chance expression of affection the sweetness of his disposition and the purity of his life. One poet—Veronica Gambara, of Parma—writing to a friend, Beatrice D'Este, of Mantua, calls him "Our Antonio." Another exclaims, "Ah, Correggio, di cor mio." Even Vasari, who sees everything as a churchman, and considers it his duty to allocate to each painter his position, not only in this world, but in the next—even Vasari turns a blind eye on Correggio's lapse from the orthodox faith. He tells us how Da Vinci was shrived, after penance, with many tears—and received the Holy Sacrament according to Catholic ritual; how Torrigiano, a condemned heretic, escaped the disgrace of martyrdom by dying in the prison of the Inquisition before the capital sentence could be carried out; how Raphael submitted his soul with much contrition, and left money to the priests for an altar with a statue of Our Lady in marble; how the death of Sebastian del Piombo need not be parti-

CORREGGIO

cularly considered because he had already become a *religioso* ; how the frescoes of Taddeo Gaddi were so delightful that they obtained from God—for his posterity—the most honourable offices in the Church—Deaneries, Bishoprics, and Cardinalates ; how the architecture of Brunelleschi was laid on such sure foundations that it secured for himself a place of repose in heaven. All this, and much more, Vasari tells us of other painters—but of Correggio he says only that “ he always lived in the manner of a good Christian, and then departed to another world.” The truth is that with Correggio it was the letter that killed, the spirit that gave life. What letter ? What spirit ? The letter of ecclesiastical dogma—the spirit of Christianity.

All this is finely wrought out in Mr. Heaton’s book : and one of the incidents he records reveal, as by a flash of light, that the misgivings of the painter were not unknown even in the very arcana of religious life.

The nuns of a neighbouring convent were ladies of wealth and taste. They also, like Correggio, were tired of the everlasting alternative of sacred pictures or bare walls ; and they commissioned the young painter to make for them a “ house beautiful.” But what should he paint ? Not the old story of that Last Supper, which had so often



Alinari

PLATE XXXIII. AMORETTI, FROM A FRESCO BY CORREGGIO

SANTA DIANA

figured in the refectory of a nunnery. The Lady Abbess looked for many more suppers. She would like something more up to date. He should paint something more enlivening. He should paint the story of Diana returning from the Chase. Correggio, it has been said, was "innocently and unconsciously a born heathen," and he revelled in the task set before him. The chamber was vaulted, and lighted only by two casements; but never again should it be considered a dull place. In the centre he painted an exquisite figure of the goddess. Diana is in the act of springing lightly into her chariot, which is drawn by two white doves. The wind plays kindly with her garments, revealing how beautiful she is. Round the chamber and over the vaulting of the ceiling, romp the Amoretti, lovely boys, in groups of twos and threes—such as Correggio alone knew how to paint. His Holiness objected—but the Lady Abbess was intractable, and the fresco remained. Is not the chaste goddess the very prototype of the Order over which she presided?

Time moves quickly with the "Allegrì" and fresh demands are made upon him for the altarpieces he dislikes. The man who could paint such Cupids dancing round Diana, is thought to be the man to paint Cherubs floating round the Blessed Virgin. At last comes the great triumph of his

CORREGGIO

life—the painting of the dome of the Cathedral of Parma. As in the case of Titian, in the Church of the Frari at Venice, the subject is “The Assumption.” The design reveals in profusion all the finest characteristics of the painter. The dome has become heaven itself. Gabriel the Archangel descends in a sea of glory to meet the “Mother of God.” She, ascending, is borne on the wings of a countless host ; and, following an idea taken from the early mosaics of the basilicas, Correggio has attempted to unite heaven with earth—the Church Triumphant with the Church Militant. Running round the dome—at its base—he has painted a balcony, or balustrade, within which stand the Apostles and Saints of the Early Church—their attitudes and gestures indicating the liveliest interest in the celestial vision. But is it a vision ? —says Correggio. Is it not the reality ? See, the young angels are all one with the figures on the balcony—watching and waiting like them ; and in the meantime swinging incense, just as little boys swing incense in the choir when Christ is said to be upon the altar. In certain lights you cannot distinguish the real incense as it climbs the walls, from the smoke of the burning of the censers of the heavenly host.

But the smoke of the burning of real incense has had its effect. After four hundred years of it there is very little of Correggio’s incense left—the

MR. RUSKIN ANTICIPATED

picture is a mere wreck. It was lively enough, however, in its time ; and from the first, stories have been told of it, some of which are too interesting to be forgotten. It is said that a working lad, who assisted in the preparation of the walls with the wet plaster necessary for the painting of fresco, remarked that "Messer Allegri's picture looked like a hash of frogs." Mr. Heaton suggests that this bit of rough criticism obtained celebrity because it expressed the unuttered thought of wiser men. To appreciate the point of the story it is necessary to realize the peculiarity, not only of Correggio's design, but of the favourite dish, which perhaps the boy understood better than the picture. A great company of men and angels are represented as ascending from earth to heaven. They are high over our heads ; and looking up we see them foreshortened—their feet and legs being of necessity nearer to us than their faces. Now the point of the satire is this. In a "hash of frogs" the hind legs only are displayed in the dish—the rest is left to the imagination.

Does this echo of a caricature of centuries ago destroy the value of the picture to us ? or lessen the glory of Correggio's genius in our eyes ? The mason's boy had never heard of the "correggiosity of Correggio"—and yet his style curiously resembles that of Mr. Ruskin when he denounces

CORREGGIO

Raphael's cartoon as a mere decoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads? No doubt the boy thought that he had surely made an end of "Messer Allegri"—as Mr. Ruskin thought to have made an end of Raphael. And the Canons of Parma thought the same. They would have made a clean sweep of the work of one of the five great painters of the Renaissance, had it not been for the intervention of another of the five. They appealed to Titian—and the verdict went against them. Titian differed from the monks—and from the boy—and from Mr. Ruskin. "If you were to fill the dome with gold," he exclaimed, "you would not do more than measure the value of Correggio's painting."

In 1519 Correggio married. But the lives of Antonio and Girolama are not so interesting as are the lives of some of the great painters. The "wolf" never watched at their door. They had law suits—which do not concern us; and then more money came—that was all. In the same year his sister was married also; and it is said that the "Marriage of St. Catherine," now in the Louvre—one of the loveliest of his pictures—was painted for her as a wedding present. The legends of his avarice and of his untimely death through attempting to carry home too great a weight of money—which the monks had insisted upon paying



Hanfsaengl

PLATE XXXIV. THE HOLY NIGHT, CORREGGIO

FROM A PAINTING IN THE ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN

NO. 1111
ANNEXED

CORREGGIO AND SHAKESPEARE

him in copper—have been proved to be fabulous, by the discovery of documents showing his final distribution of his possessions. In 1521 Correggio painted the picture by which he is best known in England—the “*Ecce Homo*” of our National Gallery—then followed the many beautiful *Madonnas*, and *Holy Families* which have carried his fame through all the galleries of Europe. But the quarrel with the cathedral authorities notwithstanding the arbitration of Titian, deepened, and with the death of his wife there fell upon him a great depression. He retired from Parma to his native village—where for the rest of his life he refused to paint any but mythological subjects. His “*Jupiter and Io*”—

We'll show thee *Io*, as she was a maid,
And how she was beguilèd and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done.

was painted about this time, and may have been the very picture Shakespeare describes in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Correggio died in 1534. How his life differed from the lives of his great contemporaries. Compare his quiet labours, in a provincial town, with the strenuous enterprise of Da Vinci and Michael Angelo ; or his brief years with the Ten decades of Titian ; or his retired habits with the meteoric

CORREGGIO

splendour of Raphael's career. The stars did not dance together at his birth ; he had no princely revenue to enjoy ; there was no King to minister at his death ; no contest between great cities for the honour of making his grave. It is a curious incident that while all the world writes his name "Correggio" he was content to write "*Coraggio*"—which is simply the Italian for "courage." I take Correggio as the type of the artist who lives the life of a good citizen, earning his daily bread by his Art, and dying before the reward comes—This is his record.

A child who never had a birthday—for the oldest register of his parish begins a year too late.

A lad fairly educated—making the best of a Literary Society in a country town.

A young man, driven from his home by the plague—discovering in the galleries of a provincial city pictures which inspire him to be a painter.

An artist without the temptations of riches or poverty—beloved of prince, and poet, and scholar, and painter—happy only in the affection of his wife and children.

A master-painter—counting himself only an art-student to the last.

A student, living within a few days' journey of Rome, who never visited that city, nor saw the works of his great contemporaries.

RECONCILIATION

A man who revolted from the old Faith, without making peace with the new.

A man whose interest in life died when his wife died, and who within a few years was forgotten.

Forgotten, that is, by his neighbours. Forgotten for a little while—or rather only beginning to be remembered. We remember him now, and his works. It is not necessary to enumerate the splendours of sweetness and grace that came from his easel in the forty years of his life. As Da Vinci had reconciled Classic Art with living flesh and blood ; as Michael Angelo, had reconciled it with passion ; Titian, with colour ; Raphael, with all these ; so Correggio reconciled it with beauty.

It is not always during the lifetime of an artist nor necessarily at its close, that the true measure of his influence can be determined. But the contemporaries and immediate followers of Correggio did not fail to perceive that he had created a new standard in Art. Vasari thinks that he had a special trick of painting a woman's hair, but that is only the conceit of a second-rate painter who never saw very deeply into anything. Vasari, however, discloses the truth, incidentally, without being himself quite conscious of it. A Florentine poet, at the instance of the artists of the day, composed some verses in Latin as a tribute to his

CORREGGIO

genius, which I will translate, not literally, but dramatising them a little. The Graces unite to petition Jove that Correggio, alone of mortal men, shall be permitted to paint them.

EUPHROSYNE

O Father ! Sovereign lord of earth and air !
Thou who dost hearken to the Muses' prayer !
Thou who hast made us so divinely fair !

AGLAIA

We come, thy Charites, by right divine,
We come as sisters of the sacred Nine,
We come to lay our griefs before thy shrine.

THALIA

We, in whose beauty gods and men delight—
We have been painted—ah, the fearful sight !
Aglaia, glum ! Euphrosyne, a fright !

EUPHROSYNE

Forbid it, Jove ! Michael is too severe ;
Raphael is cold ; Titian is insincere ;
Leonardo is a learned engineer.

ALL

There is a man in Parma !

That man is, of course, Antonio Allegri da Correggio. Correggio is summoned to Olympus. There, amidst the Immortals, the Graces stand unveiled—*et nudas cerneret inde Deas*. What is the Diploma, or Letters Patent under the Great Seal, of a Royal Society of Artists compared with this ? Correggio is pronounced by Jupiter at once and for ever to

FIVE LOVERS

be the Court painter of the gods. For myself, however, I am content to believe that Correggio had married a beautiful woman, and that it was not Aglaia, nor Thalia, nor Euphrosyne, that he saw amongst the stars, but the lovely Girolama.

Let me revert for a moment to the little comedy with which I began. I compared the Renascence to a drama in five acts, with five great actors on the stage together. Without turning it into a tragedy, let us imagine that the five are all in love with the same enchantress. The first shall be a scholar—with the intellectual force of a Da Vinci—a philosopher—a very Prospero in learning—

Being reputed
In dignity; and for the liberal arts
Without a parallel—

He should talk to her of the embroidery in her hand, or of the book she was reading—and she should take him as—her teacher.

The second lover should be a hero—with the high aspirations of a Michael Angelo. His eyes should be lifted to heaven—and she should say—

I saw his image in his mind,
And to his honours, and his radiant parts
Am consecrate. Let me go with him.

—and she should go with him—not as his Desdemona, but as his friend.

CORREGGIO

The third should bring to her the glory of the Orient—light and colour—such light and colour as Titian painted. But like the Prince in the Merchant of Venice, he should let his mind dwell too much upon the quality of the caskets—

Is't like that lead contains her ? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought—

—and he should choose the golden.

The fourth, with the calm, serene, measuring eyes of a Raphael, should seem to look past her ; and she—as if she also looked past him into the future, and saw the decadence coming, should say, with Coriolanus—

My soul aches,
To know, when two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter.

The fifth should look straight into her eyes—not at the embroidery in her hands, not at the book she was reading, not at the richness of her jewels, not past her, but straight into her eyes—remembering that, after all, the Muses were but women. I know that Correggio had never read Shakespeare, but he had read Dante, and knew that it was “ the drawing together of the eyes ”—*il disiato riso*—that alone overcame, or even so much as counted in love. Correggio was the first painter who painted woman for her own sake.

THE NORTHERN TEAM

Is it a strange thing that simple beauty should be the last gift of the Renaissance ? Does it mean that beauty is the highest gift ? or that when the highest has been attained decadence is of necessity at hand ? As a fact the Decadence was at hand. Look again at my little chart of the lives of the painters. It will be seen that in the year in which Michael Angelo died there was scarcely a great master living in the world. Had all the stars, then, faded out of the heavens for ever ?—

The Pleiads, Hyads, with the Northern Team ;
And great Orion's more refulgent beam ;

Ah, no. As surely as the world goes round, one constellation is succeeded by another. Why—here is one more coincidence. The year in which Angelo died—in the south—was the very year in which Shakespeare was born—in the north—and a new Renaissance followed of which we have not yet seen the end. Do we ask what will be the end ? I am not afraid for the end. I am not afraid for Art any more than for Religion.

ANNO DOMINI



CLAUDE. *Call me at sunrise.*

MESSENGER. *The day is already breaking.*



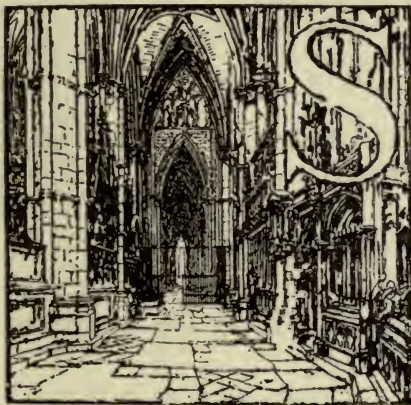
PLATE XXXV.



Claudio.

PLATE XXXV. FROM A PAINTING IN THE
MUSÉE ROYALE, PARIS

ANNO DOMINI



SIX ANGELS have come and gone—a seventh stands at the gate. Shall I call it The Angel of the Decadence? The word seems so natural under the circumstances of its coming. First we have seen the

Awakening—that is, the revival of Art after the darkness of the dark ages. Then the exploits of the giants—the five great painters—and finally the dwindling of the sacred flame which inspired them, or at least the scattering of the fire amongst a multitude of lesser men.

ANNO DOMINI

But the word "Decadence" is an ugly word at its best, and at its worst has an incurable twist in its meaning. The apparent dwindling of a flame is not necessarily decay—the flame may be doing its work by making many hearts incandescent; nor is the scattering of light decadence if it kindles light in other stars. Moreover I believe with Robert Browning that—

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world.

So I run my pen through the word "Decadence," and write in its stead—Anno Domini.

Another flight of birds of passage, and it is all over. The summer is past—the Renaissance is at an end. Precisely the same thing has happened as followed the Awakening.

Where do they go? Why do they go in flights? Why are there such long intervals between flight and flight? Look at the vertical line, which represents the year of our Lord, fifteen hundred. It impales twenty or more of the names of the most distinguished painters of the Renaissance. From first to last their lives cover the greater part

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

of two centuries, but how unequally are they distributed during that period. For about ten years they were almost to a man living together—



and then they vanished, one by one, like swallows going home. After the passing of Michael Angelo only two or three remained above the horizon—Titian, and Tintoretto, and Veronese—as if they

ANNO DOMINI

lingered over Venice afraid to cross the Adriatic on their way to Olympus. There came another flight, a century later, of the painters of the Decadence—and then, so far as the Art of Italy is concerned—there was an end of all things.

But, it may be asked, where were the poets all this time? Look once more at the diagram, and it will be seen that the line marking the division of the fifteenth century from the sixteenth marks also the meridian of the life of Ludovico Ariosto. Ariosto—like Dante—was the central figure in a great company of painters, and both of them were crowned. It is a ceremony of unique interest, this crowning with laurel of a poet, chosen by the magnates of Church and State, with the suffrages of the people. The brightest intellects of the day gathered in the Capitol of Rome to the coronation of their favourite. And Ariosto was a favourite. He preferred, as did the Florentine, to be a first-rate Italian poet, rather than a second-rate writer of Latin verses. This was against the advice of his learned friend—Pietro Bembo—who should have known better, for the Cardinal was himself as fine a scholar in Italian as in Latin. In the studio of the artist Ariosto was idolized. He was a year older than Angelo, and six years older than Titian. It is to Titian that we are indebted for the delight of seeing him face to face. It is said that between

ARIOSTO AND TASSO

his Orlando Furioso and his Satires there was something to please everybody. Even the banditti, who infested the country, and would rob a painter or hold him for ransom without scruple, doffed their caps to Ariosto and escorted him politely and with safety to his castle. But he passed with the rest, and it is difficult to trace any special mark that his poetry has left on the Art of the Renaissance. Even a great poet can be overshadowed, if his companions in Art are greater than he.

And if Ariosto could not save Art from the fury, neither could Tasso deliver it, any more than he delivered Jerusalem. It is impossible, however, in an incidental reference like this, to do justice to his genius. It is not with Poetry that I am concerned, but with Art. Sometimes, at the National Gallery, where the pictures are covered with glass, we see as if it were part of the painting a vision never contemplated by the painter. It is the reflection of a picture on the opposite wall. And the same thing occurs with Poetry. In its very brightness it reflects the glories, the shortcomings, the sins, of the studio. Thus in the mistakes—the “howlers” as they would be called in the schools—of Shakespeare, in his references to Art, we see something of the degradation to which Art had sunk in his days. As Dante was the poet of the

ANNO DOMINI

Awakening, and Ariosto of the Renaissance, so Tasso was the poet of the Decadence. Does he unconsciously reflect the sin of the Decadence? or does he write satirically? In a lovely passage describing Armida's Garden, we read:—

So in the passing of a day, doth pass
The bud and blossom of the life of man—
Nor ere doth flourish more; but like the grass
Cut down, becometh wither'd, pale, and wan;
Oh, gather then the rose, while time thou hast;
Short is the day—done when it scant began;
Gather the rose of love, while yet thou mayst;
Loving be loved, embracing be embraced.

That is a translation by an English poet, Fairfax, made perhaps while Tasso was still living. But are they the words of Tasso? or even of Armida? Ah, no! *they are the words of Armida's parrot*—spoken to its feathered fellows, who all sit hushed to listen.

Whether of set purpose or not, it is a satire. It is a reflection as in a glass before a picture of the insincerities of the studio. The great painters of the Renaissance had spoken, and the Decadents were content to repeat what they had said. This they were taught to do—as parrots are taught to phrase sentences not inspired by their own thoughts. How much did Tasso help them, or did they help Tasso? The time came for his



Torg Tasso

PLATE XXXVI. THE POET OF THE DECADENCE
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY RAPHAEL MORGHEN

THE CARRACCI

crowning in 1595—but he died before the appointed day. So did everybody else, as far as Art is concerned. If Tasso had lived a day longer, and been crowned, there would not have been a single painter of the first rank living in the world to acclaim him laureate.

Except the Carracci—that brings us back to terra firma. For at the close of the sixteenth century it cannot be said that all was lost. The Carracci rallied the forces. A new theory was established which proved effective, if not lasting. It was the theory of the Eclectics. There is no doubt, said the Carracci, that there have been many great painters with many excellencies. But they were divided. If Michael Angelo excelled Titian in imagination, and Titian excelled Michael Angelo in colour, an excellence is conceivable that should surpass both—and it is ours to discover it. That is the theory of eclecticism, and it redeemed Art from the extinction with which it seemed to be threatened for at least a century.

Who shall measure the value of that century of respite, or the debt we owe to the two brothers and a cousin we are content to lump together as “The Carracci.” Ludovico, the eldest of the three, founded a school at Bologna, and only to read the names of his many disciples is sufficient to enable us to realize something of the far-reaching effect

ANNO DOMINI

of his dogged perseverance in the attempt to *produce* great painters by *imitating* great painters. Besides Agostino and Annibale, whose brilliant frescoes in the Palace Farnese were painted in rivalry of Michael Angelo, there were Guercino—whose lovely picture of the “Dead Christ with Angels” is well known in our National Gallery; Domenichino,—the painter of “The Last Communion of St. Jerome,” hung in St. Peter’s as the companion picture to Raphael’s painting of “The Transfiguration;” Carlo Dolci—whose very name betrays his weakness as well as his strength; and above all, Guido Reni, the painter of the Aurora in the Rospigliosi of the Quirinal.

We must pause for a moment here. The name of Guido Reni must not be passed over as one in a list. Guido was the painter of the Aurora. I have always thought that Aurora was rather a naughty girl. At any rate she was troublesome—calling everybody in the morning before daybreak. Besides, she was a little uncertain in her temper. I am sure that her brother, the Sun, and her sister, the Moon, must have had a hard time of it—to say nothing of Hyperion, her father, with whom she appears to have been scarcely on speaking terms. Even when she drove out in Apollo’s chariot—though some say she had horses and a carriage of her own—it was arranged that she should have it



Hanftaengl

PLATE XXXVII. AURORA

FROM THE FRESCO BY GUIDO RENI IN
THE PALACE OF THE ROSPIGLIOSO

AURORA

all to herself. If she chanced to pass Phœbus on the way she would hastily alight before he sprang into her seat, and took the reins.

At the Rospigliosi Aurora is seen at her best. She has quitted the chariot without assuming a fit of the sulks. Phœbus has taken her place, while she herself leads the dance of the Hours, as they all climb the arch of heaven together. As Guido paints seven of these Hours, with clasped hands, surrounding the bright god, I suppose he means that the sun rises at seven o'clock. This seems a little late in the day. But then, the picture was painted late in the day. Guido was born—as Minerva said to Arachne—at the wrong time. He was born in 1575, with the Eclectics of the Decadence—whereas he should have been born a century before, with Correggio of the Renaissance. What can we expect from a painter living just a hundred years after the Golden Age.

Perhaps we get a little tired sometimes of hearing about the Golden Age. Perhaps we are not quite sure that the period we call the Renaissance was of pure gold—it may have been silver gilt. Perhaps the days of the Decadence were not altogether brass. We have no Vasari to raise the latch of the studios of the Eclectics. The gentle Giorgio—*il raccontatore decano* of studio life died while Guido was still in the nursery. There is, however, an incident that reveals the artist at

ANNO DOMINI

his best—just as he painted Aurora at her best. A visitor to his studio, impressed by the grace of his figures, questioned him as to the name of the woman whose astonishing loveliness had been his inspiration. “I will show you,” replied Guido, “whence I derive my inspiration.” Summoning the servitor employed to grind his colours, a huge, uncouth fellow, with a look more like that of a devil than a man, he made him kneel down, with his face uplifted towards the light. Then, taking his pencil, he drew a Magdalen, in just the same attitude, but with a face as lovely as that of an angel. The visitor attributed it to enchantment. “No,” replied the painter, “if the beauty and purity we seek for exist in the artist’s mind it matters very little what or who is his model.” The story ends there. It does not relate how that very day Guido had received another visitor—the Seventh Angel of the Renaissance.

Guido Reni lived, however, to see the sunrise painted without the intervention of Aurora. In 1600, the very year in which Claude was born, he left his native town and settled in Rome—where, as a disciple of the Carracci, he worked for twenty years. Before he returned to Bologna, Claude, still little more than a lad, had moved upon the scene. By the time Guido died in his old home, Claude had led the artists out of the studio into the fields.

THE ECLECTICS

But if Guido Reni was one of half a dozen—and the six were only half a dozen of the twenty-five, and the twenty-five were all of one school—were there not enough painters in Italy at the beginning of the seventeenth century? Ah, yes—there were enough painters, and I am not speaking derisively of their claims to our regard. But in Art, the same thing can never be done twice—and what they were seeking to do had been done already. Their art was based on reverence for the great masters. Not blind worship, but intelligent appreciation. They knew the masters' strong points—they knew also their little weaknesses. They would emulate their strength, they would eschew their defects. They would paint with the grace of Raphael—with the imagination of Michael Angelo—with the fire of Titian—with the tenderness of Correggio—with the correctness of Da Vinci. It was a noble aspiration. But it left out of account one thing. Genius is not catching like fever, nor hereditary like the gout. And the Eclectics soon found themselves rivalled by another School, of which Michael Angelo Caravaggio—how splendid the name sounds—was chief. He was born a few years after Angelo died, and did not name himself. But he lived to create a following—Spagnoletto, and his pupil Salvator Rosa—strong men, calling themselves Naturalists. Like the Carracci, they also believed

ANNO DOMINI

that they knew the trick, that they had found out how Michael Angelo did it. The wind bloweth where it listeth—and thou canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.

And yet it was still Anno Domini, and so long as God is in Heaven the world is all right. Just then a star slipped from the sky. Down, down, it came, like a crystal lamp, till it rested on a little village in the north-east corner of France. At the very time when the Naturalists were disputing with the Eclectics, in Italy, as to the best way of providing the world with Michael Angelos, Shakespeare, in England, was dreaming his dream of a Midsummer Night, and Claude Lorraine, the first landscape painter, was born on the banks of the Moselle.

Was Claude, then, the Seventh Angel of the Renascence? I do not say that—any more than that Cimabue was the first, or that Goëthe was himself the Zeit-geist which a little later gave us “Wilhelm Meister” and “Faust.” I say only that Claude was the first painter to see the sun rise, and that the light which flashed upon his canvas was more than the breaking of another day—it heralded the dawn of Landscape Art. Men had indeed painted landscape, from the time when Titian began it, as backgrounds for more serious subjects. But it was a new thing when Claude

A RUNAWAY

painted the opening of the gates of day without so much as inviting Aurora or Apollo to sit for their portraits. Every landscape painter does it now. For all Turner cared, or Constable, or David Cox, the horses of Apollo might never have been harnessed to his chariot, and Aurora might have worn the neatest of neat gloves upon her rosy fingers. It is a great change. How did it all come about ?

Claude began it, with his paintings of sunrise. We can learn more from the story of his life than from any amount of theorising. As a child he was of a reserved and thoughtful temperament, intensely affected by the sight of anything beautiful, but otherwise apparently dull, because he found no means for the expression of the one passion of his life. He was of humble parentage, counted a dunce at school, and taken thence to be apprenticed to a pastry cook. But he was surrounded with scenes of great pastoral beauty—fine forests, rich meadows, watered by one of the loveliest of the rivers of France. He fled to the fields—he fled he knew not where—only away—hungry and footsore—but with the sky above him, and the trees and rivers and fields around him. And with all this he is to be a great painter. What shall he paint ?

He found his way to Rome. His manners were

ANNO DOMINI

so untaught, and he was so ignorant of the language that it was difficult to obtain employment. At last a painter, Agostino Tassi, hired him to grind his colours and to clean his palette. Well, here Claude's life was to begin. He who could not work in the school or the shop, could work very well now. His master taught him some of the rudiments of Art. What shall we expect him to paint ?

He must realize his ideal of beauty in some form. To him it has been given to see, and hear, and feel, through his eyes. The Divine Master did not inspire him to paint jam tarts and sugar plums. He would scarcely care to paint the companions who had dubbed him dunce. He positively could not paint the great heroes in whose presence he had never stood, and of whom, being a dunce, he had never read. The skies, the rivers, the trees, the great sea—these are his gods—these only have not thrust him from them, offended at his stupidity—these only have awakened in him the sense of a divine gift which his soul cherishes. He knows nothing of the gods of Guido ; or the saints of the Carracci ; but he does know that the sun rises every day. How could it be otherwise than that Claude should be a landscape painter ?

It is true that he still considered it necessary to embellish his landscapes with little figures, conceived in the old style. One he would call " The

PLATE XXXVIII.



PLATE XXXVIII. SUNRISE. CLAUDE. FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY

[illegible]

177

DIDO AS A FIGURE

Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca," another "Narcissus and Echo"—and still another, "The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba"—though in each case the action would be laid in strictly Italian scenery, and the figures be neither Greek, nor Oriental, nor African. Just as in the earlier schools—when apparently artists had not noticed that the sun rises every morning and sets in the evening—painters used to smuggle landscapes into figure pictures, just to enliven them with a bit of blue sky, so in the time of Claude it was *de rigueur* to add figures to landscape—"just to give it interest." The superstition died hard—but it died. It died at the hand of Turner. He also had thought it necessary to enliven his pictures with the mythology of Homer, and the adventures of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. He painted Carthage, from his imagination, and added—also from his imagination—something said to be the beautiful Tyrian Queen. She is represented as a "figure." But Dido was more than a figure—she was a very real woman. We know a good deal about Dido. In the Carlyle reminiscences the story is told of his wife's childhood. Jane made great progress in Latin, and was in Virgil when nine years old. She always loved her doll—but when she got into Virgil she thought it shame to care for a doll. On her tenth birthday she built a funeral pile of lead pencils and sticks of cinamon,

ANNO DOMINI

and poured over it some sort of perfume. She then recited the speech of Dido, stabbed her doll, and let out all the sawdust ; after that she consumed it to ashes, and then burst into a passion of tears.

Now Dido was not thus stabbed. She stabbed herself, with her own hand, for the sake of her people. But you could not expect that of a doll. Otherwise the story is beautifully told—of the Evolution in Art which, working quickly or slowly, makes surely for the extinction of dolls in landscape painting. There is in the National Gallery a painting by Claude, entitled in the official catalogue, “ David at the Cave of Adullam.” But the catalogue thoughtfully adds that there is some doubt whether the picture does not represent “ Sinon brought before Priam.” How delightful to be able to paint a picture that shall thus represent either of two incidents—the beautiful story of the Warrior King, refusing to drink of the water brought to him in his distress of thirst by his companions, because they had fetched it at the peril of their lives—or the cunning of the Greek spy, who betrayed Troy with his Greek gift. There seems at first sight a considerable difference between the act of pouring out of a vessel of water before the Lord, and the bringing into a city of the wooden horse—but what is that to the painter, if only he is permitted to substitute dolls for real

THE DROLLERIES

flesh and blood? And think of the advantages of not being too particular. A picture that represents to us anything—or nothing—may serve the exigencies of to-day and of to-morrow. "This is Daniel," said the showman, "and those are the lions. You may easily distinguish Daniel from the lions." The showman has the advantage over the authorities of the National Gallery.

If it is asked why Claude, when he ran away from his jam tarts and sugar plums, did not leave his dolls behind, or drown them at the Moselle, my answer is that he found them in Rome. They were the *débris* of the broken-up schools of the Renaissance. The love of Nature had been suppressed. It is true that every sketch by Titian of the mountainous district of Cadore where he was born—every pleasant Italian landscape full of villas and churches used by Raphael as a background for his pictures was an incentive to fresh effort to unveil her face. But Nature is a jealous mistress, and must be loved for herself alone. There were landscape painters before Claude. Great things had been done, if greatness is to be measured by the yard—and marvellous things, if we are to be content with "drolleries." Paul Brill, chief landscape painter to the Pope—designed a picture sixty-eight feet long, and Peter Brueghel—known familiarly as "Hell-fire Brueghel"—

ANNO DOMINI

filled the woods and forests with little devils. Brueghel's little devils were but dolls in another form. Is it not time that the sawdust should be raked out, and that we should take account of the angels? I read in the old Book that as he went on his way, the angels of God met him—and I think of Claude, at the Pass of the Simplon, in sight of Monte Rosa.

And he was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Claude.

And Claude asked him, and said, tell me I pray thee thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

Who was this Messenger which met the young painter, at sunrise, on his way to Italy—as the shepherd-chieftain had been met on his way to Edom—and the tent-maker of Tarsus on the road to Damascus? In what sense can a man be said to wrestle with God and prevail? Is it not written in the Liber Veritatis? O that weary journey over Alsatian fields! O that climbing of the Alps! Child, child, hungry and footsore, where art thou leading us? O serene glory of the eternal

ON THE ROAD

hills ! O first sight of the Italian plains ! Claude, Claude, what if we follow thee ? New splendours upon our path. The face of Aurora growing brighter, until, behold, a sunrise ! Diana stooping no more to kiss Endymion—but the moon fringing the dark forests with her silvery light. Apollo no more in his chariot—but a blaze of sunshine in the meridian sky. Ceres no more garlanded and drawn by oxen—but the oxen plowing the fields, or bearing the harvest home.

I have reserved until now the question of the relation in which the Art of our own country stands to that of the Renaissance. With the exception of a few references to contemporary events in England, and one or two incursions from Germany and France, the story of the Renaissance is the story of Italian painting. Italy had come into the heritage of Greece, and in the time of Michael Angelo, Rome was the Art studio and picture gallery of the world. The Louvre, at first a royal palace, then a prison, then once more a royal palace, had not yet become a “house beautiful” for the people. The Escorial—monastery mausoleum, church, palace, library, museum, with its hundred and twenty miles of wall space, had not been built. The Hague was the finest village in Europe, but it contained no treasury of Art. Munich had no Pinacotek—Dresden had no

ANNO DOMINI

Madonna di San Sisto—London had no National Gallery. And yet the Renaissance had stirred Europe to its heart's core. The flood tide of Art had reached France, and Spain, and Flanders, and Germany and England. Is it strange that as, at the Awakening,

The Avon to the Severn ran,
The Severn to the sea—

—so, during the Decadence, every river flowed towards Rome? Of course the Moselle did—Claude found that out, as we have already seen. It may seem to lose itself at Coblenz, but if you watch carefully from Ehrenbreitstein at the other side you will see a strange sight—two rivers in the same channel not mingling their waters. The runaway lad with his knapsack over his shoulder observes the effect, and passes on—to Rome! Then the Seine—the silvery Seine, at Caudebec between Evreux and Rouen—fringed with tall poplars which stand on guard like an army of spearmen and are reflected in its bright surface as in a great mirror which turns the whole world upside down—there the two Poussins, Nicholas and Gaspar, meet and clasp hands, presently to find themselves—in Rome! At Cologne, Rubens looks out upon the Rhine, and yellow as it is, it is not yellow enough, he must seek the still yellower Tiber—at Rome! Velasquez and Murillo,

THE AVON AGAIN

at Seville, have only to sail down the Guadalquivir, and round by the Pillars of Hercules, and there is the blue Mediterranean, with Etna and Vesuvius flinging their dark incense—if the wind sets from the south—towards Rome! Even the painter of “drolleries,” Brueghel, escapes from the network of dykes, which encompass his Dutch home, and not being drowned in the Zuyder Zee, takes his little devils—to Rome! But the Avon? How is it that—

The Avon to the Severn ran,
The Severn to the sea—

—and yet our William Shakespeare never found his way to the city of the Cæsars.

Is it because Shakespeare was not a painter, but a poet? That is precisely the point to which I am leading. Every great School of Art has come with its singers. The Parthenon was built to the music of the Greek Dramatists. The Laocoon was rhythmic with the verse of Virgil. The mosaics of the Basilicas were the response of Art to the songs of the Church, emancipated from the darkness of the catacombs. And when the tesserae of the mosaics were found to be only bits of dead stone, Dante—like another Orpheus—breathed into them the breath of life, and they became the living frescoes of the Awakening.

ANNO DOMINI

What gift then did Shakespeare, bring to Art ?
He was the contemporary of Tasso, the poet of the Decadence. Shakespeare was the younger of the two by twenty years, and must have known something of the poetry of the Italian—which was the delight of the English Court—though Tasso could have known little or nothing of the Englishman and the new movement. *La Gerusalemme Liberata* is classic, is romantic, is instinct with the spirit of chivalry and unquestioning belief. It is the story of the Crusades. Godfrey of Bouillon is besieging the Holy city, held by the Saracens. Armida, the heroine, is a witch—not an ugly old witch like the weird sisters in Macbeth, but beautiful as Lilith, in Rossetti's still more weird ballad "Eden Bower." Lilith is the snake wife of Adam before Eve was created.

(Eden bower's in flower.)

Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Ah—what curious questions Tasso raises—and Rossetti plays with, as if they were the strings of a musical instrument—questions which never troubled Shakespeare. Who made Lilith ? Was it fair to create Eve afterwards—even if Lilith was that "old serpent" of whom Paul speaks. Why is Armida sent by the Spirit of Evil to sow discord in the camp of the Crusaders, and to allure

THE
NATIONAL
PORTRAIT GALLERY



Emery Walker

J.D. Allen Shakespeare

PLATE XXXIX. FROM THE PAINTING IN
THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

SINGING ART TO SLEEP

them from their allegiance to Christ, by sensual delights in an enchanted paradise? But the infernal plot fails. Armida is herself converted by a Christian knight—

(O the bower and the hour)

As in the cool of the day God shall walk
In the garden.

All the graces of tender sentiment and high aspiration, are lavished on this song of the Decadence. There is ineffable sweetness in its rhythmic beat, running through sixteen thousand verses, everyone rhyming with *a*, or *e*, or *i*, or *o*. To scan it is like watching the rise and fall of the breast of a beautiful woman, whose slumber is not disturbed by evil dreams. The Poet of the Decadence sang Art to sleep.

But while Tasso was singing Art to sleep, in Italy, Shakespeare, in England was rousing it to fresh conquests. The glory of Shakespeare is not that he destroyed old forms, but that he created new. The idols had been shattered before he came upon the scene. The gods had disappeared ; the saints had been discredited. To the vision of the artist there lay open only the streets of the city—where men trafficked ; or the fields—where they toiled for their daily bread ; or the narrow walls of their homes—where life seemed dull and common, or enlivened only by the petty excite-

ANNO DOMINI

ment of tempers rubbing against each other. What can Art do with these things? Shakespeare gives the answer. He seeks no intervention of the gods—the common passions of humanity are enough for him. His sacrifices are not such as are made by priests upon altars—they are the sacrifices of love and devotion, made on the hearth stone. His retributions are not the devices of an infernal senate—they are the natural results of evil actions.

Lo! two babes for Eve and for Adam!

(And O, the bower and the hour.)

The first is Cain, the second is Abel.

That is the drama of life on which Shakespeare raises the curtain. Comedy or Tragedy—Tragedy or Comedy—always with a little Landscape :—

The soul of one shall be made thy brother.

(Eden bower's in flower.)

Thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other.

Tasso's Armida and Rosetti's Lilith are imaginary—so also are Shakespeare's Gertrude and Lady Macbeth. But Lilith and Armida are not variants of Nature—they never existed. How then shall we know their true colours? When we paint the devil we make him black. The Ethiopians paint him white. Shakespeare seems to have discovered that Art is the interpreter of Nature, and is therefore sworn to truth.

THE REVEILLE

I am not attributing this discovery altogether to Shakespeare. In a forward movement it is impossible sometimes to discriminate between primal and secondary forces. The reveille is sounded in the camp before the battle—and the soldier awakes. He marches at early dawn with other units, and we cannot apportion between the commander in chief, and the colonel of his regiment, and his comrades, the exact responsibility of each step he takes. It is the same with great things and small. Jupiter carries his satellites safely round the sun, and yet they move in the great circle in which he moves, and by the same law. So, the lost souls compared by Dante to a flock of sheep—where what one does the others do, simple and quiet, and the reason know not—are yet driven by the force which moves all things. Who was the commander-in-chief, is too large a question for these pages—but I am quite sure that the comrade who stands nearest to the Painter is the Poet—and that it was Shaksepeare who sounded the reveille.

My story is ended. Shakespeare was not one of the Seven Angels of the Renascence. He was the Messenger of the New Covenant of Art, made with God in the wilderness, that Nature should never again be cast out. In my lectures at the Royal Institution on Shakespeare in relation to

ANNO DOMINI

his Contemporaries in Art, I have shown that the Covenant is being faithfully kept—at least by the English landscape painters of our own day. This forms the substance of another volume,—but I will anticipate a page of it for the sake of illustrating the extreme divergence between the old schools and the new.

There are two main lines on which the evolution of Art may proceed. It may proceed as in the Renaissance by the direct expression of passion—through the representation of human life and action ; or, as in the modern schools, by the reflex expression of passion through the representation of the world in which we live. Let me now paint two pictures of the same subject—the renewing of life with the returning year. The first I will call “The Return of Proserpina.” The second shall be “The Coming of Spring.” The change from Mythology to Nature—from the Renaissance to Modern Art—is like a transformation scene in a pantomime. The curtain rises—*Tableau*.

We see Proserpina—as Titian or Correggio might have painted her—a beautiful maiden, attended by nymphs, scattering flowers. On the left is her mother—the stately Ceres—in garments of green, which sweep across the foreground. In the middle distance is the grim figure of Pluto in his chariot, from which Proserpina has descended. He looks

EVOLUTION IN ART

at her sullenly, as though he half repented of his bargain, and meditated carrying her off again. More distant still we see Apollo, pursuing Aurora whose white horses are scarcely visible in the brightness of his coming. On the margin of a stream is bearded Pan, fashioning a flute from the reeds—to the music of which the nymphs shall presently dance.

Slowly the scene changes. A modern English landscape painter brings his palette and brushes. There is a tremor in the garments of Ceres, and lo ! a field of corn, with the breath of the wind upon it. The white horses of Aurora quite disappear in the pale mist of morning. Dazzled with the brightness of Apollo's coming, we close our eyes for a moment—when we open them again, we see the sun rising beyond the distant hills, and instead of his fiery steeds the patient cattle yoked to the plough. We look for Pluto and his trident, and behold ! a lake—with a sail flapping idly in the breeze. We look for Pan, and there is nothing but a shepherd lad, crossing a brook, to help a company of girls who are gathering flowers for a village festival. Even the beautiful Proserpina we see no more ; for the wind that bent the tender blades of wheat, lifted her hair as it passed, and before it could fall again on her fair bosom she had become a may-tree. The transformation is complete. *Tableau.* The curtain falls.

ANNO DOMINI

I will leave it at that. The curtain falls. The dynasty of the old masters came to an end with the close of the sixteenth century, and we are living in the twentieth. It is a long while since the painters of the Renaissance made the world splendid with their religious and mythological pictures. How things have changed. I said at first that the Art of the Renaissance was subjected to the strain of three forces—the orthodox traditions of the Catholic Church—the passionate individualism of the Reformers—and the recoil towards paganism of those who rejected the old faith without making peace with the new. Of all these forces I have taken account. Let me now define in a very few words, the course, and the issue, of the conflict—as it affects Art.

(1) The only thing that has passed through the ordeal unscathed, is the Likeness of Christ. Whatever may have become of the saints or the immortals, Christ has never been driven out of the studio of the Artist. The Seven Angels of the Renaissance have made that sure forever. Look at the Christ of the Decadence, and compare it with the Christ of the Catacombs, the Christ of the Basilicas, the Christ of the Awakening, the Christ of Michael Angelo, of Da Vinci, of Titian, of Raphael, of Correggio. It will be seen that it is always the same Christ.



PLATE XL. THE CHRIST OF THE DECADENCE

FROM THE PAINTING BY VELASQUEZ IN
THE MUSEUM OF THE PRADO, MADRID

THE ETHICS OF ÆSTHETICS

(2) If it is true that, at the Reformation, Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand—it is true also that with the Renaissance all the loveliest of the myths of Greece and Rome came to life again—myths which had educated the world before the New Testament was written. They came to life with the finding of the antique statues, and the revival of Letters. The beginning of the sixteenth century marked the very flood-tide of pagan sentiment. But paganism in Art must not be confounded with paganism in Religion. These myths, known and acknowledged to be myths, carry no taint of superstition, nor do they traverse the symbols of our Faith, nor are they misleading—any more than Milton's *Comus* is misleading, or Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, or Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. Whatever may be the effect of the variableness of dogmatic teaching upon religion the ethics of æsthetics are always Divine.

(3) Finally it is discovered that the Paradise of Art is not an appanage of the immortals or of the saints. After all, poor little Proserpina is only an English girl who has married a Viceroy and lives the half of every year in India, coming home on a visit to her mother, when the flowers are at their loveliest in the old garden. It is that which entitles her to a place in Art. And Saint Cecilia ?

ANNO DOMINI

She also is a lovely woman, who sings divinely—Raphael was quite right in making the angels listen. For Art is the visible record of our lives—the re-incarnation of our souls. Not only does it *reveal* what we are—it *makes us* what we are. As surely as the weavers of Arras wove Raphael's designs into the tapestry of the Sistine Chapel—so surely Art is still weaving—weaving—weaving into the warp and woof of our lives some pattern. What pattern is Art weaving for us ? I see in it silken threads, blue as the azure of the heavens ; cruel threads, crimson with the blood of many battle fields ; threads golden with the promise of the future. I suppose the Creator can be approached through a may-tree, or a corn field, or a sunrise, as sincerely as through Proserpina, or Ceres, or Aurora. But of the Future of Art we know nothing—except that the constellation now rising will not be the same as the one that is setting—that it is Anno Domini—and that the Seventh Angel is with us still.

THE END

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